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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON

FIFTEENTH MEETING

16 MAY 1961

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. KENNEDY

MR. DULLES

ADMIRAL BURKE

CAPTAIN SCAPA

MR. KING

COMMANDEER MITCHELL

LT COLONEL TARMATER

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~~SECRET~~~~EYES ONLY~~CAPTAIN SCAPA

(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

QUESTION: Did you check the Navy plan?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes.

QUESTION: Were you satisfied with it?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: For the operation at that time, yes, sir.

QUESTION: Did you check the training with regard to the ships?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: No, sir, there was no way to check because these were merchant ships and LCIs which had never operated together. The plan was to bring them together at a port outside the country, brief them at the very last moment, and then send them on their way.

QUESTION: Were you generally satisfied with the personnel on the ships, the skippers and so on?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: My only contact with them was at Puerto Cabezas during the four days that I worked with them personally.

QUESTION: How was their performance?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: As far as merchant ship skippers and their enthusiasm, excellent. I was amazed and surprised that the operation went as smooth as it did, the manner in which they conducted themselves, arrived at the various rendezvous points and arrived at the objective area with a minimum of confusion was really commendable.

QUESTION: You mention seeing them off from Puerto Cabezas. Did you stay there?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: No, sir, we returned to Washington.

QUESTION: Did you have any responsibility for the Naval aspects of the operation?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, sir, I was the Naval advisor.

QUESTION: Would you give us your impression of the actual execution of the Naval side of the operation?

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CAPTAIN SCAPA: The execution went off extremely well.

QUESTION: That comment applies to the landing in the objective area?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, sir. From the little information we have received on the landing, everything started off on schedule as far as the reconnaissance of the beach and the landing of the troops.

QUESTION: What about the unloading plan at Red Beach? How did they expect to get their equipment ashore?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: They had some small craft.

QUESTION: I have a conflicting impression. One time I got the impression that they expected to use the ships' boats and then at other times I got the impression they contemplated using LCUs?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: No, sir, not unless time permitted sending the LCUs up there. The main unloading was supposed to take place at Blue Beach. At Red Beach they were only supposed to offload their troops and the personal equipment that went in with the troops.

QUESTION: Did you ever make an estimate of how long it would take to unload the ships at Red Beach?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: We estimated approximately four hours.

MR. DULLES: We have a report, I think, that the engines on six or seven of the aluminum boats didn't work. Do you know anything about that?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: No. When they were put aboard ship they had been completely tested.

QUESTION: The reports from the survivors say that all the boats but one broke down, the engines didn't work, the mechanisms for getting them off the ships wouldn't work. Were those things tested?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Some of the ships had tested them.

QUESTION: Did you check those things?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: No. These boats were put aboard at Puerto Cabezas and tested there.

QUESTION: Who tested the boats?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Army and Air Force personnel down there.

QUESTION: Were these Cubans or Americans?

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CAPTAIN SCAPA: Americans.

STATEMENT: The problem may have been that the salt air caused the engines not to start because they hadn't been turned over during the trip.

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, but these were outboard engines and you can't turn them over unless they're in the water because they need the water for circulation.

QUESTION: Were you in the command post when the message came in from Captain Rydberg stating that he was going to withdraw the ships because of the bombing?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Was that message ever answered?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: When we received word that they were being bombed we told them to withdraw all the ships immediately. As I recall, that went out in the clear.

QUESTION: When did you learn that the ATLANTICO and the CARIBE had proceeded far to the south?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: We sent the message for them all to clear out of there and to proceed to a designated point. We didn't receive any word from them, so we tried to check their positions. After a considerable period we received word that they had proceeded far to the south.

QUESTION: I wonder if that 200 miles could be accurate. Did they have time to go 200 miles and back?

COMMANDER MITCHELL: The CARIBE was 218 miles south. The ATLANTICO was about 105 miles south.

QUESTION: In checking over the naval portion of the plans did you have any misgivings about the difficulty of controlling this heterogeneous force at sea?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Very much so.

QUESTION: Did you make any comments?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, sir, we discussed it very thoroughly. One of the main problems that we discussed was the secrecy of the entire operation. I

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don't know how much you've been informed on it, but this was one of the big obstacles of the entire operation.

QUESTION: What kind of comments or suggestions did you make?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: Mostly they concerned how we were going to support these ships logistically. I was told, however, this was no real problem because the ships were going to sail from the States to Puerto Cabezas where the crews would be briefed and then they would depart for the objective area; and for the number of days that would be involved, this was quite adequate. Of course, after the ships arrived there, the operation was postponed, and before we knew it some ships had been at Puerto Cabezas almost three weeks. My first big problem was logistics, but again this was taken care of within the logistics department of the operation section. The other problem was, of course, planning how to get these ships to operate together, signals and communication. Again we had to simplify it to the bare minimum in order to sail the ships and have them arrive on schedule.

QUESTION: Was there any discussion of putting Americans on the freighters to provide better control?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: We had discussed it, but this idea was thrown out on the basis there was to be no U.S. participation.

QUESTION: Thrown out on the general grounds that you couldn't use the Americans?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: But this was not considered a real problem because the whole operation was to be accomplished in a quiet area of Cuba where they would have time to offload.

QUESTION: What was your impression of the ammunition situation at the end of the second day?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: Very critical. As soon as we knew that two ships had been sunk we knew that the situation was going to be grave because the one ship at Blue Beach had the majority of ammunition and vehicles.

QUESTION: You'd say that everyone at the command post was very much impressed with the fact that they would need ammunition?

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CAPTAIN SCAPA: Very much so. We planned an airlift into that area that night and we also wanted to get the CARIBE and the BLAGAR and the BARBARA J. back into Blue Beach.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Did you realize that you just had the ATLANTICO to contend with because the CARIBE was so far south?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, that's correct. The other solution was to load the LCUs with the packs from the BARBARA J. and BLAGAR.

QUESTION: Do you recall that about 11:00 o'clock that night they did transfer the ammunition and the packs to the LCUs?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Later on that was cancelled. Do you recall the circumstances?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: As I recall, the reason it was cancelled was because they would have arrived at the beach too late to withdraw from the area by dawn.

QUESTION: That's what the record shows, but was that ample reason?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes. We were very worried about the air attacks.

QUESTION: But if you didn't get the ammunition in that night you would lose the beachhead. In retrospect, wouldn't you take the risk of putting those ships in there?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: That's difficult to answer. We've argued it out before. It was feared the ships would be sunk and the men still wouldn't get their supplies.

QUESTION: Yes, but those same ships were under air attack on D-Day and most of them came out.

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, that's true.

QUESTION: Was there any real debate on this at the command post that night?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, sir, and, of course, one of the Cuban crews almost mutinied rather than go in on the second night.

QUESTION: Do you recall whether any special effort was made to get air cover?

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CAPTAIN SCAPA: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Was there any special request that night? We can't find any record of any special request from the command post that requested cover for the convoy. There was a request for air cover for the beach. Do you have any recollection of a request for cover for the convoy?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: No, there was no requirement at night.

QUESTION: But for cover for them to withdraw the next day?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: No, not that I recall.

QUESTION: Looking back on this naval action, what are the big lessons that we should bear in mind?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Well, number one, you can't plan an operation like this without the wholehearted or all-out support of the military. You have to cut the military in completely.

QUESTION: Would you say you didn't have the wholehearted support of the military?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: I think the Navy did everything they possibly could within the limitations imposed upon them, but I feel that from the very beginning that there was never the necessary coordination with the military. The whole thing was based on arriving at the beach and conducting a landing without opposition. I think the whole operation was based on the assumption that Castro's air force would be destroyed.

QUESTION: If that was the assumption then why was the decision made to go to the open sea during daylight? If you'd destroyed the air force you wouldn't need to go to sea because they couldn't have moved artillery up in that time. There seems to be a little inconsistency there. Undoubtedly the plan was to unload and get out to sea, but if you have destroyed the air force you don't have to get out of there.

STATEMENT: I think they wanted to make it appear that this force had come from Cuba somewhere and consequently they wanted to get the ships out of there.

MR. DULLES: Yes, but they were Cuban ships and Cuban crews and Cuban owned, everything about them was Cuban.

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CAPTAIN SCAFA: There were several considerations, Mr. Dulles. One was to have them in there in time for landing the troops. Our plan was to unload the one small ship, the RIO. We knew the RIO would be there at daylight, but the other ships were to get the troops off and get out. There was no need to keep them there because their cargo was such it wouldn't be required until later on. The RIO was the key ship.

QUESTION: If they could unload them in four or five hours, why was it that actually very little was unloaded?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: That's correct. However, we knew it would take longer to offload the RIO. She had the vehicles, deck cargo, and so on.

QUESTION: I thought you said earlier that it would take about four or five hours?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: No. At Red Beach I said it would take about four hours to offload her troops and their personal equipment at Red Beach, just the gear they carried ashore with them.

QUESTION: Wasn't there anything else aboard?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: Not very much. Just deck cargo, gasoline drums, and that sort of thing. They were to come back later on and unload their big stuff at Blue Beach.

QUESTION: Were all the ships supposed to be unloaded by dawn?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: No, sir, only the troops and their essential equipment, not their cargo and such.

STATEMENT: I never heard this before. I thought they were supposed to be gone from there at dawn. That's not true?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: Yes, with the exception of the RIO. The RIO was to stay on and offload at Blue Beach, using the LCUs. The other ships were to evacuate to a given point offshore.

QUESTION: Why wasn't this plan carried out?

CAPTAIN SCAFA: Because they were caught at dawn still there.

QUESTION: Why were they caught at dawn if the plan was to be out of there?

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CAPTAIN SCAPA: We knew it would be very close to dawn.

STATEMENT: But they really didn't get started unloading.

RESPONSE: I think the 5th Battalion Commander hadn't started to unload and as some of the boats wouldn't work, so I think it was a breakdown in command and mechanical problems.

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Of course, this was not a U.S. Navy style operation. The only time they got together was just before they sailed. There was absolutely no rehearsal.

QUESTION: What would you say about the naval plan now, if you had to do it again with the same ships and everything?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: I don't think I'd change anything. However, if I could change the boats, I'd have a different type of boat to offload the troops. This was a last minute consideration.

QUESTION: If you had a command ship in the actual Bay area, would that have been helpful?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: I think it would have been a tremendous help. Trying to run the operation from Washington created much delay.

QUESTION: Supposing it didn't have to be kept so secret, how would you have run it?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: Then I would have tried to bring the Navy into it more from the very beginning. I wasn't brought in until the very last and the plan had essentially been drawn up, for the TRINIDAD operation in particular. I think it was a grave error that the Navy wasn't brought in from the very beginning. The whole requirement was for logistic support and the type of craft to be used for offloading of troops should have been given much greater consideration. We were banking strictly on the LCUs and LCVs that were provided.

QUESTION: Did it occur to you before the landing that these small boats were not adequate?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: I knew they were inadequate. But we were faced with a problem of buying craft that could offload the troops in a hurry and procurement

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was a big problem in the short time that we had. We had to settle on what was available and what they could get.

QUESTION: Did this mean any kind of boats that they could get?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: At this time, yes.

QUESTION: When was this time?

CAPTAIN SCAPA: About ten days or two weeks before the actual operation.

We had to procure them, get them assembled, send them down to Puerto Cabezas, load them aboard ships, and train some crews to run them.

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DO 12958, 25X  
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Date: MAR 22 2000

31 May 1961

AMU 3-20-2000

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SUBJECT: What briefing, if any, was given the Brigade  
or the Brigade's staff on going guerrilla.

REFERENCE: Paragraph F. of Memorandum Dated 22 May 1961.

The following is a summation of actions involving preparation and instruction for contingency employment of the 2505 Brigade in the event elements of the Brigade or the unit in total suffered defeat and were forced to operate as guerrillas.

1. All officers and the original cadre (some 375 personnel) which formed the 2505 Brigade received extensive instruction (in excess of 13 weeks) in guerrilla warfare organization tactics and techniques. It was with considerable difficulty and only after strenuous instruction or conventional operations that the officers of the Brigade were weaned from their marked inclination to guerrilla operations. Many of the unit leaders had in fact operated as guerrillas either with Castro forces in the fight against Batista or in the later operations against Castro after he had seized power.

2. During the evening, staff and operations classes conducted during the Brigade training cycle extending from November 1960 through March 1961, several discussions were held on the subject of a conventional force defeated in the field and forced to continue resistance as guerrilla element. Circumstances and ways of means of organizing and operating in various parts of Cuba were discussed in detail. These discussions did not cover the Zapata area specifically for security reasons, but covered the other feasible areas to include the Zacastray, Pinar del Rio and the Oriente. These discussions were not covered with any specific direction towards the Brigade operation in these locales, but were

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in the nature of contingency operations planning, i.e., "in the event we suffered defeat and it was physically possible, we would attempt to break contact and retire to a redoubt area where we would initiate guerrilla activities." The stated mission of the Brigade for which it was organized and trained was to land by sea and air and fight a conventional conflict as an organized military force. At no time did the Brigade once organized receive training to fight as a guerrilla force. To have attempted to conduct such training would have detracted from the purpose for which the Brigade was organized and would have been detrimental to morale. An indigenous force of the size of the Brigade cannot be organized and trained in the time allocated to concurrently accomplish both missions (conventional military role and guerrilla force role) satisfactorily.

4. During the pre-staging briefings of commanders and key staff officers at the training base in Guatemala (period 25 March to 7 April 1961) the operation plan (less locale and target date) were briefed to the Brigade Commander, Deputy Commander and S-3. Contingency provision in the event of the defeat of the Brigade involving fragmentation of the unit and attempts to initiate guerrilla operations were discussed. It was mutually agreed that these contingency plans would be discussed only down to the level of Battalion commanders prior to the landing to avoid defeatist talk and apprehension concerning success of the operation. These discussions covered both the aspects of an element or elements of the Brigade becoming cutoff from the main body and attempting to break contact with the enemy, and assume guerrilla posture, as well as the possibility of the Brigade as a whole being cutoff from the sea as it advanced inland and the possibility of its assuming a defense in a redoubt area or fragmenting for guerrilla operations. It was mutually agreed that no specific plans for this eventuality could be pre-planned insofar as ground actions were concerned due both to the security provisions prohibiting early briefing of any Cuban personnel as to the specific locale of the landing and the circumstances surrounding the combat action which might lead to an element or the role of the Brigade to assume such a contingency plan.

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However, the following general provisions governing such operation were mutually agreed to:

- a. Resupply to the Brigade would be primarily by air with secondary reliance on clandestine maritime craft. Drop procedures would be provided for in the Operation Plan.
  - b. Communications would be directed to the base control outside the target area by the five RS-1's and seven TPI radios in operation with the Brigade. (Not in the command commo trailer.)
  - c. Tactical integrity would be preserved wherever possible and the operational size of guerrilla units would be dictated by the specific local conditions prevalent in the operation area.
  - d. Command lines would be preserved with the Brigade Commander or his designated representative, preferably a senior unit commander exercising operational control of specific operational areas.
  - e. Local recruits and volunteers would be accepted but the Brigade would maintain the 2506 personnel in command and key positions in all formations.
  - f. Local law and customs would be observed, provisions or resources commandeered would be paid for or receipts given.
  - g. Terrorist operations effecting personnel other than GOC governmental or military personnel would be avoided.
5. At Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, subsequent to briefing on the target area, these contingency provisions were further discussed with the same individuals (Brigade Commander, Deputy Commander and S-3) with further specifics addressed to the terrain of the Zapata area. The following points were covered:
- a. Red Beach Task Force (2nd Bn, 5th Bn and Co. A of 1st Airborne Bn) would hold Red Beach area in the event Blue

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Beach was forced to withdraw to the north. Blue Beach Force would withdraw to the north along the coast road. Upon junction with Red Beach Task Force at the head of the bay, the Brigade would withdraw to the south and west into the greater Zapata area, breaking contact with the enemy and assuming guerrilla operational status or preparing for evacuation in increments as feasible. Alternate courses of action (evacuation or guerrilla status) were to be implemented as dictated by the circumstances.

b. In the event Red Beach was cutoff by the enemy from contact with Blue Beach, the same course of action was to be followed by the Red Beach Force. If, however, the coast road to the Blue Beach area was open and the Blue Beach Force holding, the Red Beach Force was to retire to the south to effect junction with Blue Beach.

c. Blue Beach Force, if cutoff from Red Beach and capable of breaking out, was to move as appropriate to either or both the following areas bordering Blue Beach and attempt to evade pursuit and initiate guerrilla operations.

(1) The area bounded on the north by El Jiqui and the Jaguey Grande Red Beach road to the northeastern edge of the swamp and thence south to the Covadonga/San Blas road and the road southwest to Playa Giron.

(2) The area to the east and north of Blue Beach bounded by the Playa Giron, San Blas, Covadonga road on the west thence southeast along the edge of the swamp to the western edge of Cienduegos Bay.

d. It was mutually agreed that this plan might not be feasible if either major force (Red or Blue) were closely pressed by the enemy. Evacuation by sea was deemed undesirable by the three officers concerned who stated that they must fight and win or go down in defeat without recourse to evacuation and that they would not consider or discuss evacuation.

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6. The Brigade Commander prior to embarkation stated that he had discussed the details of this contingency plan with the commanders he considered appropriate. He stated that he considered this plan to be particularly suitable for the small airborne contingents dropping on DZ's 4 and 5 at Jocuma and San Miguel de Pita respectively. This contingency was further discussed with the Airborne Battalion Commander De Valle on the night of 17 April prior to takeoff by Lt. Col. Egan.

7. In summation it must be stated that little interest or enthusiasm was displayed by the Brigade personnel concerned for any aspect of the plan that involved retreat and defeat, to include this contingency for guerrilla operations plan. It was generally recognized and openly stated by the key officers that any military force involved in an airborne/ amphibious landing and subsequent field operations against an enemy defending his homeland would have an extremely difficult time assuming a guerrilla role in any substantive force subsequent to defeat in the field. The defeat itself implied that the enemy in close combat had surrounded or ruptured and destroyed the Brigade as a military force, thus allowing only a fraction of its combat effectives to escape to assume a role as escapees and evaders with a limited potential for later guerrilla operations.

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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

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AT THE PENTAGONSEVENTEENTH MEETING18 MAY 1961PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. KENNEDY

MR. DULLES

ADMIRAL BURKE

GENERAL LEMNITZER

MR. VARONA

MR. RAY

MR. KING

COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT COLONEL TAWMATER

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GENERAL LEMNITZER

(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The thing I would like to say at the very beginning is that I consider the JCS role was one of appraisal, evaluation, offering of constructive criticism, and assisting CIA in looking at the training and detailed plans. Defense participated in the role of support.

QUESTION: What action was taken on the over-all U.S. plan of action for Cuba developed by the JCS in late January?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, we prepared a plan of action for Cuba and forwarded it to the Secretary of Defense. There's some question of what happened to it up in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I did discuss it with Dean Rusk and Mr. Dulles at one of the high level Governmental meetings on the 22nd of January. Several attempts were made by General Gray, at his level, to interest State and CIA in preparing a national plan based on the TRINIDAD concept. State was pretty receptive, but the people at CIA were not quite as receptive because they were involved in planning this operation and were already pretty well under way, as a result of a previous decision taken way back in March 17, 1960.

QUESTION: What was the JCS view of the military feasibility of TRINIDAD and ZAPATA?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, TRINIDAD first. Assuming control of the air, we felt that the landing could be effective against a light opposition which was the most that was anticipated in that area, but like all other considerations, the ultimate effect centered upon the uprisings that would be generated throughout the islands and the reinforcements which would be gravitating toward this particular beachhead.

QUESTION: Control of the air -- what did that mean to you?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It meant that the air plan would succeed in knocking out the limited facilities available to Castro.

QUESTION: 100%?

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: Not 100%, but a great majority of the aircraft.

QUESTION: How could you deal with any remaining aircraft, since you had only B-26s?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It was expected that the initial strikes would be generally successful, since Castro's aircraft were concentrated on several fields. Following the initial strike, it would be a matter of matching the aircraft that were allocated to this plan against what remained of Castro's aircraft.

QUESTION: In recurring strikes thereafter?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's right. We didn't intend to stop with just the strike on D-Day.

QUESTION: It seems to me that several times there was a confidence in 100% control of the air and this just never happens.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I never heard of a 100% success. On the other hand, you didn't have too many aircraft, and if we did some of the things that were anticipated and one important thing that I haven't heard discussed, the question of the diversionary landing has not received the attention that it deserves. Having been involved in this type of operation during the war, we always put great stress on diverting the enemy. This was a very important part of the Cuba plan but, unfortunately, it didn't go. When you only have one diversionary attack to attract the enemy's attention to another area and it doesn't get in, this is very detrimental to the over-all success of the plan.

STATEMENT: There was a feeling that a 100% job would be done on Castro's air force, which just doesn't happen.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I wouldn't go along with the idea that there was a feeling there would be 100% success in any kind of an operation.

STATEMENT: This is Colonel Hawkins' reply to a message: "Since the plan called for the destruction of Castro's aircraft, there seemed to be no point in putting anti-aircraft guns on the ships."

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I inquired as to what machine guns, or anti-aircraft equipment they had aboard the ships, and they mentioned the 50 caliber guns, and so on, and this seemed reasonable for the type operation that was envisaged.

QUESTION: Did the Chief approve ZAPATA?

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NO FORN DISSEMINATION



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GENERAL LEMNITZER: It didn't stand out so loud and clear, but nevertheless the same general type of ultimate action was contemplated. There were three alternatives in ZAPATA, after they got on the beach, if it looked as though the uprising would not occur. First, we were in a guerrilla type country. Second, the Escambrays were quite a long way away, but they could be used as a guerrilla base. Third, if we succeeded in getting rid of most of the enemy air, the force could have been withdrawn and reassembled for possibly another type of attack somewhere else.

QUESTION: Do you think they could have been withdrawn without overt U.S. support?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I didn't regard this as a single beachhead. This particular plan never involved a 36-mile beachhead with 1400 men -- that would be absurd. Green Beach and Red Beach and Blue Beach were small lodgments that never involved a continuous perimeter.

STATEMENT: In talking to a lot of the operators I find that they felt that they really had impassable obstacles and that anyone coming into the area had to come down the roads.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That is correct. There was no intention that the beachhead would include this whole area.

QUESTION: With regard to the question of being in guerrilla territory, was any independent study made?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, so far as I was concerned, I didn't go beyond the information we got from the CIA and from my own staff, that this was an area in which the guerrillas had operated for over 100 years.

STATEMENT: I think this was considered guerrilla territory about 100 years ago and then about 60 years ago, but not recently.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: There are few people living in it and few roads, and so on.

STATEMENT: There is no place in which you can maintain yourself in that swamp.

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: I suppose the same thing could be said about the Escambray Mountains. I'd like to make clear that we did not like this area as well as the TRINIDAD area, and one of the reasons was that it was more difficult to break out of there.

STATEMENT: You mention the preference for TRINIDAD -- I'm not sure whether you're aware of it, but the Secretary of Defense apparently never appreciated that point. In fact, he had the impression that the Chiefs thought that ZAPATA was the better of the two plans.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I just don't understand how he got that impression. I can show you in my notes on two accounts where I called it to his attention. We also put it in writing that "of the alternate plans, alternative three is considered the most feasible and likely to accomplish the objective. None of the alternates involved are as feasible and likely to accomplish the objectives as the present paramilitary plan." I don't see how you can say it any clearer than that.

STATEMENT: I think it's just a question of too many papers and being confused.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I'd like to go back to your question about guerrilla territory. This ZAPATA area is not much different from that in Vietnam, where they're having the devil's own time chasing the guerrillas through the swamps.

STATEMENT: There are several problems. First, in comparison with the area in Vietnam, there isn't an expanse where these people could move. This is more limited. Furthermore, the towns and villages are on the outside where the invasion forces couldn't reach. The second problem is that these people were never trained or told that they were supposed to become guerrillas.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't agree with that because they were trained as guerrillas for 9 months.

STATEMENT: That was until November, 1960. There were only about 300 of them at that time, but then the great influx of about 1,000 came in after that time, and the great influx never received any instruction in guerrilla training.

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: It was our understanding of the plan without any doubt that moving into the guerrilla phase was one of the important elements of the plan, and any idea that the Chiefs considered that they were making an indefinite lodgment on the beachhead is not right. Every bit of information that we were able to gather from the CIA was that the guerrilla aspects were always considered as a main element of the plan.

QUESTION: What I can't understand is when it was presented to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, why didn't it receive a great deal of attention?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That was regarded as one of the alternatives if they weren't successful.

STATEMENT: General, if you look at that area and talk with anybody who has been there, you couldn't possibly become guerrillas in that damn place.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't see why not.

STATEMENT: Where are you going to get the water and the food? It's not like Vietnam. They sent helicopters over and shot all these people down.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: In Vietnam, for example, they don't get any food. They sustain themselves in an area just like this.

STATEMENT: As I understood it, they did, that's why they put the wire around the villages.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: They put the wire around the villages to keep the food in, but there was also the possibility that these fellows would establish themselves as guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains or in the swamps and they would receive air drops.

ADMIRAL BURGE: Guerrillas couldn't sustain themselves in any of these areas until they got support from the populace. Supplies would have to be carried in to them until they received support from the populace.

STATEMENT: The President had the same impression that you did -- that if worst came to worst, this group could become guerrillas, but as we've gotten into it, it's become obvious that this possibility never really existed.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Then we were badly misinformed.

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STATEMENT: Without training and instruction, they would never have gone guerrilla.

MR. DULLES: I wouldn't wholly buy that. These people had a cadre of leaders - 20% to 30% would be the leaders. They knew about guerrilla warfare. The guerrillas in World War II never had any training until they got into a guerrilla operation.

GENERAL GRAY: It was always considered that the most feasible action was withdrawal from the beach by sea. This came up at one White House meeting when Mr. Bissell made the statement, that if we do have to pull out, the best course of action would be to withdraw from the beach.

STATEMENT: But they had no plan to withdraw by sea. They had no capability to withdraw by sea, except as provided by the U.S. Navy.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, it's a question of the time of withdrawal.

STATEMENT: It still isn't clear to me how you're going to get them off if you wait until they are buttoned down on the beaches.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Certainly as far as withdrawals are concerned, and I said this many times when the operation was on, the most difficult operation in the world is the withdrawal under enemy pressure from a beachhead. But that was not the kind of withdrawal that was anticipated, as far as I was concerned.

QUESTION: That's the picture that shaped up and that's one of the unhappy aspects of the picture. Let's go back to TRINIDAD. The JCS said that TRINIDAD had a fair chance of success. What was your estimate of the feasibility of ZAPATA?

GENERAL LEWITTZER: Still feasible, but less so than TRINIDAD. We considered ZAPATA feasible. I could put words together and say that we said that TRINIDAD had a fair chance and that ZAPATA had less than a fair chance, but actually we felt that ZAPATA had a fair chance but of a lower grade than TRINIDAD.

QUESTION: If the Chiefs had had any question as to feasibility, the Chiefs would have spoken up. Is that a fair statement?

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: I'm sure they would.

QUESTION: To what extent had the Chiefs made a personal study of the final operations plan?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The final operations plan was received two days prior the final D-Day and it was too late for a personal study. Portions of ZAPATA were proposed on four occasions and approved on the basis of explanations that we got from the working group.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Is it fair to say that you gave it de facto approval on a piecemeal basis?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No other solution was feasible at that time. The rainy season was approaching and one thing that I would like to mention here was the fact that they had 100 MIG pilots being trained in Czechoslovakia, and we didn't know when they were going to be returned, and our thinking was strongly influenced by this fact.

QUESTION: Was any discussion given as to what would happen if a few MIGs appeared?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, all we could do was to go on the basis of the information we had that the MIGs had not yet arrived. We also felt that if this operation was going to go, it should go before Castro received two Soviet destroyers that we understood were being delivered.

QUESTION: What would have happened if you had had a couple of MIGs there at the time?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Their appearance would have pretty well complicated the operation.

QUESTION: Were any steps taken in order to prepare for that possibility?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: None, other than the possibility that you might go to the Navy and ask the Navy for overt support, but that was very unlikely.

QUESTION: What was the Chiefs' view on the suitability of the terrain?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We discussed that somewhat. It was considered not as suitable as TRINIDAD for the reasons that I indicated. Their success depended upon their ability to seize the approaches to the swamp areas. Now the size of

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of the beachhead question was emphasized before. There was a plan to put lodgments in the entry ways into the swamp area. The size of the area was dictated by the necessity of protecting the airfields, and to prevent access to the swamp. The large area wasn't considered desirable but acceptable if the approaches were held and control of the air was established.

STATEMENT: When you commented on ZAPATA the first time, the air plan was for D-Day strikes only, but with no limitations.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's correct.

STATEMENT: Later there were limited strikes on D-2 and limited strikes on D-Day. Would you comment on this watering down of the air plan? Were the Chiefs satisfied with this?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The D-2 strikes were added for non-military reasons. We would have preferred to do without the D-2 air strikes. They were never intended to accomplish the destruction of the Castro air force. They were to lend plausibility to the story that the D-Day strikes had been launched from within Cuba.

QUESTION: Did you object to the D-2 air strikes?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, we did not object. We would have preferred not to have them, but for non-military reasons they were considered to be of great importance and they were approved.

STATEMENT: They could have been quite disastrous because they could have alerted Castro and he could have dispersed his aircraft.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, but he didn't.

STATEMENT: Yes, but that was just luck.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, but here again you get into the old battle of getting into an operation of this kind covertly, political and psychological considerations against military considerations. My conclusion here is, which I'll explain a little bit later, you have to be very careful about diluting military considerations in order to attain non-attribution and non-association with the United States.

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QUESTION: Do you feel that you or the Joint Chiefs were the defenders of the military aspects of the operation, or was CIA?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The defenders of the military parts of the plan were the people who produced it and that was CIA. We were providing assistance, and assuring the feasibility of the plan.

GENERAL TAYLOR: What led to the idea that it was necessary to maintain that all of the air strikes emanated from Cuba?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We were strong for the TRINIDAD Plan. However, about the middle of March during a meeting at the White House, Mr. Mann was gravely concerned about the impact throughout the Latin American area of these air strikes coming from outside of Cuba. He hammered at the point repeatedly and wanted to know if there wasn't some area in Cuba where they could land on a ready-made area. At the conclusion of this meeting CIA was directed to review the whole idea and come up with alternative landing areas other than TRINIDAD, because TRINIDAD didn't have the kind of airstrip that was required to provide plausibility to the story that the aircraft had come from within Cuba. This was an important consideration.

QUESTION: Was this approved beyond Mann?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: He was the one who expressed the views. I don't know how much Secretary Rusk or any of the other people were involved. As a matter of fact, it was a disappointment to me, because I thought we had a plan that had been thoroughly worked out and hated to see another delay and another complete evaluation of the island. It caused some concern both in my own group and in CIA. On March 16, when we had another meeting and were discussing the ZAPATA Plan, Mr. Mann liked the ZAPATA Plan because of the airfield and indicated that it provided us with a plausible denial. I indicated that the JCS had gone over the alternatives and didn't think that any of them were as good as the original TRINIDAD Plan, but of the three to be considered, ZAPATA was the most achievable. Then I said this, that it was not clear to me why ZAPATA was any more acceptable from the political point of view than the TRINIDAD Plan. Whereupon Mr. Mann replied that it gave plausible denial to the launching of air

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operations from outside Cuba. He said we needed a facade behind which we could deny that these attacks came out of the United States, Guatemala, or Nicaragua.

QUESTION: Why were they so sensitive about the fair name of Guatemala and Nicaragua?

GENERAL LEWITTZER: Well, his concern was how much this particular operation might upset or antagonize the other Latin American nations by doing violence to one of the members of the OAS. He was deeply worried about the impact of this type operation conducted with our support and assistance which he felt was generally known, and he was especially worried about the air aspects of the plan.

QUESTION: With regard to the D-2 and the D-Day air strikes both of which were to be limited, did the Joint Chiefs feel they had an adequate plan?

GENERAL LEWITTZER: I won't say they regarded it as adequate; it was a reasonable air plan. I'd like to point out that the D-2 air strike was never expected to wipe out Castro's entire force. It was the D-Day strike which was the important one. The D-Day strike involved fragmentation bombs, napalm, 50 caliber machine guns. This was an all-out effort and one of the critical aspects of the whole operation. The air plans for TRINIDAD and ZAPATA were the same. They were the same for the reason that the targets were identical. In the examination of the ZAPATA Plan, we were merely looking at the location of the landing. The same number of aircraft were on the three essential airfields and the air plan was not considered to be affected at all as far as the D-Day strikes were concerned.

STATEMENT: I would like to make two points: First, there were three plans considered and the objection to one of the plans was the fact that the air strip wasn't adequate. That same objection was not made in connection with the ZAPATA Plan. The second thing is that the ZAPATA Plan as it was originally considered, anticipated capturing this airport and then have the planes take off from the airport.

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, sir. That's wrong.

STATEMENT: I'm just going by what the paper says.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Are you saying that these aircraft were supposed to fly from Nicaragua and then land and load up and take off and bomb and so on?

STATEMENT: I don't know. I wasn't there.

GENERAL GRAY: I think it's wrong to base that whole ZAPATA Plan on one paper because this was just the first cut at the ZAPATA Plan. After that the ZAPATA Plan was considered again and again over a period of time, and all this became very clear as it went on.

STATEMENT: Yes, I understand, but we're just talking about the beginning. The important thing is that you didn't turn one plan down because of the air strike situation, and yet you did turn another plan down because the air strike situation wasn't adequate. You didn't turn ZAPATA down because the air strikes weren't considered adequate, and yet the air strikes consisted of taking off after dawn.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I didn't think there was any material change in the air plan. The targets were the same regardless of where you'd land. On D-Day the air plan involved going after the Cuban air force; thereafter, they would take under attack any movements of troops to the area and they would attempt to knock out microwave communications stations on which the Cuban national communications were largely dependent.

QUESTION: What did you think would happen if you weren't 100% successful and didn't get a couple of T-33s?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: In war, you never expect 100% success. However, a couple of T-33s are not going to be decisive elements in an operation of this kind.

QUESTION: Were there any comments or discussion about the T-33s in particular?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I think I had information that they were armed, because we had been trying to get some kind of equipment against the Pathet Lao

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and we were considering what the distribution of T-33s was around the world. We saw that some of them had been armed as reconnaissance planes and it was suspected that the Cuban air force had armed theirs - but they weren't bombers.

STATEMENT: Yes, but they hit targets.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, but the T-33s didn't sink any ships.

STATEMENT: Yes, they did.

STATEMENT: No, not the T-33s. I think they were Sea Furies. A Sea Fury was the one that hit the RIO.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I have a long list of the reasons why we preferred TRINIDAD to ZAPATA: It was more distant from Havana, the closeness to the Escambray Mountains, there was only one access road into the area, the nearest Cuban army unit of any size was 100 miles away, and considerable support from dissidents was expected in that area.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the importance of control of the air?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Absolutely vital to success.

QUESTION: Were the Chiefs satisfied with the plan of pre-D-Day strikes?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We first talked about some strikes on the day before D-Day, but the D-Day strikes were regarded as critical. We were particularly interested in napalm, or I was, because I've seen the effects of napalm on aircraft when they're parked close together; also fragmentation bombs. Of course, elimination of the D-Day strike greatly eliminated the insurance against attack from the Cuban air force.

QUESTION: Were the Joint Chiefs of Staff involved in the cancellation of the D-Day air strikes?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: They were not. It came as a surprise to me.

QUESTION: When did you hear about it?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: At 2 o'clock on the morning of the 17th of April when General Gray and General Wheeler came to my quarters on another matter. They said they had received a call from CIA urging that they get air cover for the beachhead on the 17th. It was then that I heard that they had cancelled

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the D-Day air strikes. On that occasion I strongly supported putting U.S. Naval cover over the beachhead. I directed that Admiral Dennison be prepared to provide this cover. However, I recognized the major political implications involved and directed General Wheeler and General Gray to consult with the Department of State on this matter.

QUESTION: Was the request for air cover an attempt to neutralize some of the effect of the cancellation of the D-Day strikes?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The way it came to me was that it was an urgent call for putting U.S. air cover over the beachhead.

STATEMENT: Maybe General Gray can tell us.

GENERAL GRAY: At the time I was called over to the CIA, it was about 1 o'clock in the morning. They informed me then that the air strikes were cancelled. Then General Cabell asked me if I would see what I could do to get air cover from the carrier. We eventually got permission for the Early Warning but not for the air cover.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the JCS as to the action of the landing force if it effected a lodgment but no uprisings occurred?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Those were the three alternatives. Go guerrilla in the swamps; conduct guerrilla operations from the Escambray; or be withdrawn.

QUESTION: What was the understanding of the ability of the force to go guerrilla?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It might not have been ideal country but it had been used, and it was believed to be feasible guerrilla country.

QUESTION: Did the JCS examine the feasibility of this course of action?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, no specific study. The Working Group studied the feasibility and presented it to the JCS on several occasions as being feasible.

QUESTION: What did they think of the effect of the swamp on the operation?

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: We felt that it assisted defense but it was also a double-edged sword -- it aided defense but also made it more difficult to break out.

QUESTION: How did the JCS follow the course of the operation?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The Secretary of Defense and I attended briefing sessions held in the special War Room which we set up for this operation. Then Service liaison officers, briefed their respective Chiefs with information from the War Room. There was a continual flow of information from the War Room and CIA. It came to our War Room by telephone calls, and messengers from their war room to this one.

QUESTION: There was no electronic gear?

GENERAL GRAY: Many messages came by teletype and some by phone, and then we had an officer on liaison duty with CIA.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The Joint Staff met on the 17th and 19th of April and considered important action messages. On the 18th, Admiral Burke and I were at the White House for most of the day in conference, and we followed the operations from there. That's in general how we handled it.

QUESTION: Would you say this was satisfactory?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: If we were running the operation, no. But we were in a support role. We were primarily concerned with logistic support. We arranged a rather elaborate extensive logistic support plan. We envisioned arming a hell of a lot of Cubans if the uprisings occurred. Our logistic plan was 4 or 5 times larger than the original. The Secretary of Defense was particularly interested in being sure that they had all the support that they could possibly require.

QUESTION: What was the understanding as to the ammunition situation at the end of D+1?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Our understanding was that it was critical. However, we knew there was ammunition on the LCIs and the LCUs, and there was an air drop planned by CIA on the night of D+1.

QUESTION: There was one on D-Day night and one planned for D+1?

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes.

ADMIRAL BURKE: We also tried to get some C-130s.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That is correct. We had some C-130s over at Kelly Air Force Base but they never got into the action.

QUESTION: Did the Chairman know of the flight of the ships?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I sure did. I knew of all the attempts by CIA and CINCLANT to try and round them up.

QUESTION: What recommendations were made regarding U.S. help after D-Day?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Well, Arleigh and I were over at the White House when the question of using U.S. destroyers to pick up people off the beach was discussed. The feasibility and the need was discussed right there, and the decision was made to order them in.

ADMIRAL BURKE: We didn't know what was going on at the beach so we asked for reconnaissance, and the reconnaissance was approved.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The afternoon or night of D-Day 4 B-26s were made available which we had been preparing for the Laos operations. Then 4 more were made available on D+1. In addition to that, we offered 5 T-33s and CIA accepted 4. On D+1 action was initiated to use C-130s in dropping ammunition on the beachhead. The aircraft were moved to Kelly, the packing crews were on their way, and the crews were set up for the drops on the night of D+1 but they never went into action.

QUESTION: Why weren't the T-33s turned over to CIA on D+1?

MR. KING: I believe it may have been a question of getting pilots. We were short of pilots by D+1.

QUESTION: When did you sense that the beachhead might be going down?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: On the morning of D+2, I made a comment to the President that this was the time for this outfit to go guerrilla.

QUESTION: How were your comments received?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I received a surprise when Mr. Bissell said they were not prepared to go guerrilla.

QUESTION: This was the first time you'd known about that?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes.

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QUESTION: That being the case, was there any discussion that we were going to lose the war or we were going to have to use the U.S. Navy? Was it realized that they were accepting defeat if that decision wasn't made?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I'm not sure it was put in quite those terms.

MR. KENNEDY: Could I add something? I don't think there was complete information - all the messages showing the critical situation were not transmitted to the President. However, there was general knowledge that there was a shortage of ammunition. We were told on D-Day that the ships had gone out 15 miles and they intended to come back in that night. The President had said that day that he'd rather be called an aggressor than a bum, so he was prepared to go as far as necessary to assure success, but we were always about 5 or 6 or 7 hours behind on our information. The next morning on D+1 we knew the ships hadn't come in for some reason we couldn't understand and there was a serious ammunition shortage. At this time there was no assurance whether it would be possible to hold the beachhead even if the Navy was ordered in. So at one o'clock Admiral Burke was instructed to send Navy pilots over to reconnoiter and send back a message stating whether they could maintain the beachhead. The message in reply stated there was no fighting going on, so there wasn't any point in going in that they could see. The next morning there was a message saying the beach had collapsed and they wanted to evacuate the men, so the President gave the order for the destroyers to go in, but by this time it was impossible to evacuate the men because the beachhead wasn't large enough, so then it was too late to do anything.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: It wasn't just the question of committing U.S. forces and saving the war -- it wasn't that simple. It was a question of whether or not the Navy could save it if you sent them in.

MR. KENNEDY: We didn't have any idea what the situation was there. The President said he used to walk around on that White House lawn thinking he'd like to do something if he knew what was going on.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: This is just like all actions. The Commander didn't have the kind of information that he'd like to have had.

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QUESTION: What we're talking about is the difficulty, in fact, the impossibility of running a military operation from Washington. Was this ever recognized during the preliminary considerations?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: The difficulty is that no Commander could have made these decisions down there because these were decisions to commit the U.S., and the only place that decision could be made was right here by the Commander-in-Chief. No matter where you had your command ship, you would still have to get the decision out of Washington because this was a decision to commit U.S. forces.

STATEMENT: That's very true. But I thought you might have a number of representatives of different Departments on a first-class ship with first-class communications.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: But you would still have to rely on communications from the beach.

STATEMENT: The men on the BLAGAR had a pretty good picture of what was taking place, but that picture never was transmitted up here.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's certainly correct.

QUESTION: Were the JCS satisfied to have CIA conduct this operation?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: As far as we were concerned, the job was a covert operation and the JCS couldn't legally conduct a covert operation.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I couldn't find that you or anybody else ever raised the question whether or not CIA should have run this operation.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: This thing started back in March of 1960, when this assignment of responsibility was made. I didn't get into it until many months after all of this had been decided.

MR. DULLES: I think some JCS representative was at that meeting at the White House.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't know. I wasn't Chairman at that time. Maybe Nate was there. I was not there and I didn't know a thing about it, but nevertheless there were lots of times when various people indicated that this was something the military ought to run. But again it was a question of the disassociation of the United States.

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QUESTION: Well, the JCS could have been just as dis-associated as CIA was?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: How could you?

STATEMENT: Didn't you turn over the training of these people to people from Defense? The only difference would be the responsibility for the execution of the plan.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's one of the things we have to look at in the United States Government right now. Are we going to run this thing on a covert basis - I think we were trapped by words, by covert.

QUESTION: Do you agree that an operation can be covert and still be conducted by Defense?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, we can. We've conducted some. I think you can do it with CIA provided you provide them with the military staff that they need.

STATEMENT: I think they had a lot of staff and they had what they needed.

MR. DULLES: I thought we did. We had 38 trainers down in Guatemala. that you supplied.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, we did.

QUESTION: We would like to get your views on how you think paramilitary operations should be conducted in principle. Should we make the decision that covert operations of this sort be assigned to Defense?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I think the answer to this question depends upon the size, the magnitude of the operation that is involved.

STATEMENT: General Lemnitzer, we would appreciate it if you would take the time to give us your ideas on where the line should be drawn with regard to covert operations.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I don't see how you can have covert activities by armed forces. I think it's a contradiction in terms. We can have military people that are sheep-dipped and put them in an operation of this kind. But you can't just take any officer and say he's going to be sheep-dipped unless he volunteers for it. He has family problems. The military would have a hell of a time contracting these people.

QUESTION: But there was no question of transferring it -- no suggestion?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No.

QUESTION: What is your view of the accuracy of the evaluation of the effectiveness of Castro's force?

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: The evaluation of the Navy was accurate; the air force, fairly accurate -- it was inaccurate as to pilots' capabilities, and also regarding the guns on the T-33s; concerning the army, I would say that the information was not accurate. My information was that most of the tanks were up around the Havana area, and how they moved their tanks down there that fast without having some in that area, I don't know and I haven't been able to get into it because I've been away, but I would say the navy information was accurate; the air force, fairly accurate; and the army and the militia not too accurate in terms of reaction time and capability.

QUESTION: What impression did the JCS have of the likelihood of an uprising?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: We had no information. We went on CIA's analysis and it was reported that there was a good prospect. I remember Dick Bissell, evaluating this for the President, indicated there was sabotage, bombings, and there were also various groups that were asking or begging for arms and so forth. All they needed were arms and equipment, and the impression that we got was somewhat over-optimistic; particularly in light of measures that Castro took.

QUESTION: Can defeat be properly attributed to any deficiency in the intelligence?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I would say only to a degree. For example, the estimates of the possibility of the population rising up, and I don't think we estimated the effectiveness of Castro's control of the people.

QUESTION: May I just mention the attitude most of us have on that now. This is related to the fact that no call to rise was given, and that this was withheld until they could be sure that these people had someplace to go for support, so the idea of the uprising was never really tried.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: I've seen all kinds of reports about the number of people they've put under arrest, in the stockades and so forth, which would have certainly inhibited any uprising.

QUESTION: How should a paramilitary operation be fitted into Governmental machinery?

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GENERAL LEMNITZER: I think we ought to have a national plan for any one of these situations like we have for Laos. We have a man now who is Mr. Vietnam. He does the coordinating activities for the Department and much more effectively than was ever done in the past.

STATEMENT: We have developed a little chart of the kind of things that we are considering. Would you like to make a comment on this?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: This is about what I have in mind. With a permanent Chairman with no other kind of job, you have the representation from the Departments; knowing the nature of the operation ahead of time and determining which department has the paramount responsibility, the Chairman should be selected accordingly.

STATEMENT: We visualized that this framework would be applicable to any situation.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: No, I don't think this would be practical. For instance, right now. We're ensnared in Vietnam, Thailand and Korea. You can be Chairman of just so many things. No more than about one if you're going to do the job right. I think you'd have to have more than just one Chairman.

STATEMENT: This over-all Chairman would get everything all straightened out, say here's your problem and send it to the President to make the decision.

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Secretary McNamara has some strong views about this, but I pointed out repeatedly that I had seen this tried and the Chairman can make the decision and then suddenly the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense finds that a big chunk of his resources have been allocated for something when he wants to put them someplace else, particularly when you get into the foreign policy field.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Then you feel it is good in theory but not in practice?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: That's right.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the Chiefs discharged their responsibilities as military advisors to the President in the course of this operation?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, I do feel that the Chiefs discharged their responsibility.

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QUESTION: I mean as military advisors?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Yes, I do.

QUESTION: Were the Chiefs ever consulted as to whether or not this operation was really necessary?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: This question was resolved way back in the previous administration.

QUESTION: How do you feel situations should be handled when only the Chairman is present at a conference?

GENERAL LEMNITZER: Many times the Chairman has to go to an NSC Meeting and questions come up which he has to answer from a military point of view what the Chiefs would have answered if they were in body, but you can't have everybody at that level all the time. I think the Chairman has to speak for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, generally speaking. On special occasions, I think all the Chiefs should be present.

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MR. VARONA

(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

MR. VARONA: There were many military as well as political aspects to consider in the course of our deliberations. However, I'd like to point out that the Council was not aware of the invasion; that is, the actual military aspects of it, and yet we believed that within our Council we had enough experience to have coped with the problems that came up.

QUESTION: Do you believe it would have been prudent for all the Cubans to have known of the secret plans?

MR. VARONA: No. Not all, but the top leaders should have. The grave problem was although the Cubans decided on given military leaders, these men were not accepted by the Americans, because the American advisors preferred to work with Cubans of a lower echelon. For example, we nominated Colonel Martina Lana to head the force but he was not accepted by the Americans.

QUESTION: You visited the camps and saw the military leaders that were in command?

MR. VARONA: Yes, but I was not satisfied with the persons in command because I didn't feel they were qualified military leaders. However, we were forced to accept the advisors' choice of leaders.

MR. VARONA: Rather than analyze all the errors of the past, I would just like to state that we would be in Cuba today if it was not for the lack of air support that our forces suffered. All those who've returned said that but for three airplanes, they would have been successful in their invasion attempt.

MR. VARONA: All those who have returned still want to fight. I think that everyday we are losing strength in Cuba.

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In Cuba they looked upon the coming invasion with great hope and they pinned all their hopes on it. Then when they saw that the invasion resulted in a fiasco, their morale dropped considerably. The repression and terrorism that has followed the invasion attempt has caused many of the people who would have been our supporters to go into exile. The internal fight in Cuba represents only about 10% of the problem because the people in Cuba will fight only if they have hope, and that hope is in an invasion from outside. We must rebuild their hope of an invasion. An invasion could still be accomplished. There is sufficient support within Cuba. Out of the 27 persons that our forces met on the beach, 18 joined the invasion force. This gives you an idea of the proportion of Cubans that want to be rid of Castro. I'd like to point out further that the demobilization of the camps at the present time gives evidence of defeat and failure, whereas with the recruitment of about 3,000 troops, with air cover, we would have an adequate force to do the job if Castro doesn't have MIGS and his 100 jet pilots who are being trained in Czechoslovakia.

MR. VARONA: The task of building this force could be started in camps in the United States, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, in groups of 200 - 300. I believe that this force would get the backing of the Cuban people and I believe that the Cuban revolutionary front does represent the Cuban people and has the backing of the Cuban people.

QUESTION: Should the Council be broadened?

MR. VARONA: I believe that it is sufficiently broad at the present time. Everytime you increase it, it calls for further increases.

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MR. RAY

(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

QUESTION: What are your impressions of the recent operation against Cuba?

MR. RAY: We knew it was wrong from many aspects. For instance, from a military point of view, the operation didn't go deep within the people in Cuba. Many of the people that were in the force did not know what they were fighting for. Furthermore, the wrong impression had been created. It appeared to many people within Cuba that there was too much U.S. control and this developed in a large measure from the control of the two major radio stations that were broadcasting into Cuba from the outside. Also, within the Miami area, if one didn't work for the official organization, you could get very little support.

MR. RAY: In a country where there's much discontent, there's lots of motivation, and there are many who will help in an enterprise of this kind if the people believe in something.

MR. RAY: We had a plan to take the Isle of Pines, but this was constantly postponed and we never got the supplies that we were supposed to. Later on we asked for help in the Escambrays, for air drops between September and February, and during all this period we never received any air drops. Then in early April we presented a plan of sabotage in Cuba which we called Cuban Flames. We felt we could be very successful in this because we had made a very deep penetration in the labor movement; however, we never received the support we needed for this either.

MR. RAY: Now, following the invasion we are getting many materials. Before the invasion when we asked for arms it was difficult to get them, but now its easier. We still

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believe that we can cause an uprising within Cuba amongst the Cuban people but we believe that the leaders must be developed within Cuba itself and that the force against Castro must develop within Cuba itself. We believe that the invasion concept was wrong. Another thing that was wrong with this operation was the fact that many of the elements in the invasion force represented the old army. We felt it was wrong to give the impression that the old army was coming back and we protested.

QUESTION: To whom did you object.

MR. RAY: To Mr. Carr and Mr. Bender.

QUESTION: What was Mr. Bender's reaction?

MR. RAY: I don't know. I really have no impression of any reaction. However, I ended up believing that I couldn't trust him.

QUESTION: What was Operation 40?

MR. RAY: Operation 40 was a group that followed the invasion force, or it was planned for them to follow the invasion force, to organize each of the cities. It was outside of our organization.

MR. RAY: With regard to the invasion plans, I remember talking with Mr. Varona and he said he wasn't satisfied but there was nothing he could do. He had no control. Furthermore, when we did develop ideas and plans and though we had an understanding of the plans, they were changed without our knowledge. Another thing we couldn't understand was why all the radios were tied to Batista.

QUESTION: Didn't you screen the people who went into the Brigade?

MR. RAY: We asked to be permitted to do this, but we were never granted this right. Later we protested the fact that Batista supporters were in control of the actual recruiting of people for the Brigade. We told Mr. Bender about this, but there were no changes.

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QUESTION: Did you approve of Pepe San Roman as the Commander?

MR. RAY: No. Everyone knew that he liked Batista. His brother had also fought against Castro in the Sierra Maestra.

QUESTION: To sum up some of your reactions, is it fair to say that you objected to the composition of the invasion force because it was composed primarily of people who didn't know what they were fighting for or didn't care; and second, that there were too many Batistianos in the unit; and third, you feel that you didn't receive the support you needed to keep your guerrillas active in the Escambray?

MR. RAY: That's correct.

QUESTION: What do you think should be done with the Council?

MR. RAY: It should be changed, and more weight should be given towards the attitude of the people on the Council. There has to be a willingness to sacrifice and there should be less participation in the Council by the old type political leaders. I believe that putting all groups into one organization is a big mistake. It's certainly dangerous in any underground organization.

QUESTION: Would it be possible to have a list of the Batista supporters that were in the units?

MR. RAY: Yes.

QUESTION: Don't you think there should be coordination amongst the various groups that are opposing Castro?

MR. RAY: Yes. However, we believe that the leaders of the efforts against Castro should be chosen on the basis of performance.

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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON

NO OBJECTION  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
HNS 3-20-2000

NINETEENTH MEETING

22 MAY 1961

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2/25/00

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. DULLES

MR. ESTERLINE

MR. KING

COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT COLONEL TARNWATER

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MR. ESTERLINE  
(Chief of the WH/4 Branch in CIA)

(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

MR. ESTERLINE: Branch 4 was established on 18 January 1960. At that time we established a quasi-permanent organization of roughly 20 people to begin an examination of the possibility of overthrowing Castro. From this initial organization it was gradually expanded to an organization of over 500 people. The channels of authority which were followed, moving up from myself, were to Mr. King, to Mr. Bissell, and about 50% of the time this meant dealing with Mr. Bissell's principal aide Mr. Tracy Barnes.

STATEMENT: Mr. King, this is interesting. I never knew just whether you were in the chain of command or not.

MR. DULLES: Mr. King had responsibility for the situation in Guatemala and in Honduras, and in the Dominican, and so on. He had knowledge of all aspects of this and responsibility except for the military aspects of the operation.

MR. KING: The channel of command actually went to Mr. Bissell and Mr. Barnes. I was involved in policy decisions, but not detailed military planning. I was also concerned with the expenses and personnel for the task force.

MR. ESTERLINE: I had responsibility for all ground aspects of the military operation. The other staff, DPD, had an indirect connection with us. However, in the later phase of the operation a representative of DPD was responsible directly to me.

QUESTION: Did you ever consider integrating all elements of the operation into your staff?

MR. ESTERLINE: At all times. The reason this wasn't done was because they simply did not have enough people to meet their other responsibilities and still devote full-time to us.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Then it was a question of expediency?

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MR. ESTERLINE: Yes, that's right. During the last month, during the critical period, they were responsive to my control to a satisfactory degree.

MR. ESTERLINE: On the 17th of March we received a clearance from the Special Group to attempt to set up an acceptable alternative to Castro. Our first immediate action was to establish a covert mechanism, through which we could accomplish the actions that would be necessary to get rid of Castro. At that time we formed what was known as the Frente Revolucionaire Democratica. This was composed of five Cuban political leaders that we believed were most representative of the Cuban people, and at the same time were not tinged with the worst elements of Batista, nor were they so far to the left that they would be incompatible with U.S. interests.

QUESTION: The March 17th paper set forth several things to be accomplished -- political actions, propaganda actions, and the guerrilla action. As Task Force Commander, did you have responsibility for all three of these actions, or only for the third?

MR. ESTERLINE: No, I was responsible for all three. I had specific responsibility for the establishment of the Frente, and for the establishment of Swan Island, and other activities necessary for the creation of the paramilitary capability.

MR. KING: May I add at this point that each week on the political action side I met with the Assistant Secretary of State Rubottom and later on with Tom Mann, so State knew every move that was made.

QUESTION: What is your estimate of Mr. Bender's part in this operation?

MR. ESTERLINE: I consider that he is one of the unsung heroes in this operation.

QUESTION: What is your evaluation of Mr. Varona?

MR. ESTERLINE: First, he is insanely ambitious. He's an ignoramus of the worst sort; he doesn't like the United States, and he is absolutely unable to distinguish what is and what is not a Batistiano, and last, and most important, the man has no conception whatsoever of security. Furthermore, he had a radio operator with a clandestine set in Miami. We finally told him we

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knew about it and tried to support him. On one or two occasions we attempted to put arms into Cuba on the basis of his information. However, it soon became obvious that the Cubans were aware of what Mr. Varona was doing.

QUESTION: Did Mr. Cardona meet the requirements for leadership?

MR. ESTERLINE: No. However, Mr. Cardona came in at about the time it became apparent that the FRD was not meeting the requirements we had established. This was because the Frente had decided to establish themselves as an exclusive club. And when others appeared on the scene that were of value to us like Miro Cardona, they were not prepared to accept them under any conditions except those that would serve their own personal ambitions. After the Frente had become essentially an exclusive club, we formed a new organization in which the Frente could participate. This resulted in the Revolutionary Council headed by Dr. Miro Cardona. There was some careful consideration by both State and ourselves before we decided upon Dr. Cardona to head the organization because he, as almost any political figure in Cuba, is highly controversial. Many people consider him dangerously left and cannot understand why the U.S. has anything to do with him. However, based on my own observations, I don't think he's a dangerous political factor.

MR. ESTERLINE: Mr. Cardona is critical of the fact that we didn't give him more of the details of the operation; however, we could not. I've never encountered a group of people that were so incapable of keeping a secret. No Cuban was told the actual date of the invasion, nor where it would take place, until Colonel Hawkins told the Brigade under controlled conditions, and after they were briefed, they moved to sea. This briefing took place about the 11th or 12th of April, and yet there was some indication that the Soviets somewhere around the 9th had gotten the date of the 17th. They had the 17th and the 28th of April, which means that they were getting pretty close to the invasion date. Now at that time no Cuban knew the date, so we were able to isolate the fact that the leak could not have been Cuban, but there was no indication at any time that they had any idea where the operation was going to take place.

QUESTION: What was the date of the formation of the Council?

MR. ESTERLINE: About the first of March.

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QUESTION: Anything further on the political aspects?

MR. ESTERLINE: No, but I would like to reiterate that we took no political action without clearing it with State, this included the selection of members for the Council.

QUESTION: How did you coordinate propaganda activities with State and USIA?

MR. ESTERLINE: When we first started our propaganda operation, the first thing that became obvious was that we had no media whereby we could get broadcasts into Cuba. Consequently, we came up with the idea of Swan Island. We received tremendous support from the Navy, and it was operating in four months. We devised a program that would be representative of the Frente. The Frente had its own program which was on a regular basis.

MR. ESTERLINE: We had a general propaganda line and as long as we didn't move out of this general line, we didn't have to have a day-to-day get-together. However, whenever it appeared that there should be policy coordination, the Chief of our propaganda section arranged it.

QUESTION: What brought about the change in concept from guerrilla to amphibious?

MR. ESTERLINE: When we started initially, we were simply developing general capabilities. Early in the summer of 1960, we picked a cadre of military people. In July and August we had this basic cadre in training and began to recruit a larger group up to 200 - 300.

MR. ESTERLINE: The original cadre received extensive training in guerrilla warfare. The first 200 - 300 recruits also received instruction in guerrilla warfare.

QUESTION: The first ones were trained in Panama, and received guerrilla training, isn't that right?

MR. ESTERLINE: That is correct, and these men became the senior officers of the Brigade that went into Cuba.

QUESTION: Was Pepe in Panama?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes, he was. Pepe and the Deputy Commander were two of the best students that we had down there.

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MR. ESTERLINE: Colonel Hawkins joined us on 12 September and we discussed the problem. At that point I was still of the opinion that unless the build-up of Castro's capabilities continued, we might be able to accomplish something by working with the groups that were active in the Escambray. However, about the 29th or 30th of September, we had another talk. We finally concluded that with the military build-up that was taking place and the control that Castro was establishing in the militia, it would take some sort of a shock to achieve the desired results. This led to the idea that we had to go into Cuba with more than a guerrilla force, would have to go in with a military force that could sustain itself for a week or possibly two weeks, and this force would have to be about battalion strength.

QUESTION: When was this?

MR. ESTERLINE: Between the last week of September and the first week of October.

QUESTION: Were these conclusions taken to Mr. Bissell?

MR. ESTERLINE: That's correct; and, incidentally, what we meant by battalion strength was about 750 men.

MR. ESTERLINE: At this point we were thinking of putting the force into the Escambray or Oriente, and we really didn't consider how we were going to get the men in. We felt that if we were able to put this battalion into an area of our selection, they would be able to survive for a sufficient period of time to let the people in the country rise and join them, and/or they could go into other areas where we could support them.

QUESTION: What happened when you took this proposal to Mr. Bissell?

MR. ESTERLINE: Mr. Bissell decided that this made eminently good sense.

MR. ESTERLINE: Further, I believe the Special Group was informed of what we were doing, and they indicated we should continue. This was about the 8th or 9th of November.

STATEMENT: This is important because on November 4th the training directive was dispatched which completely changed the orientation of the training. I'd like to know how this particular change came about.

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terms of aircraft, bases, and things of that sort. I made a suggestion to General Cabell at that time that we ought to bring the Joint Chiefs or the other Services into this thing, so that at some date in the future they wouldn't be able to say, "What the hell, now you come to us after you've become deeply involved in this thing. Why didn't we know it before?" General Cabell agreed with this, and I then contacted OSO and made the suggestion, but it was turned down. As I recall, the answer given was that it would cut too many people in on the operation.

QUESTION: Do you recall when this was?

MR. ESTERLINE: It must have been somewhere back in June or July.

GENERAL TAYLOR: So you'd say that you took the initiative in suggesting that the Chiefs should be brought in, but this was turned down, and, as a result, the Chiefs were not brought in until January.

MR. DULLES: They got into it earlier than that to the extent of supplying equipment and providing assistance -- maybe not the Joint Chiefs, but the DOD got in.

QUESTION: Did the Chiefs themselves know anything about this before January?

MR. ESTERLINE: They were briefed on two occasions on the Cuban operation.

QUESTION: When?

MR. ESTERLINE: They were briefed early in the game.

MR. DULLES: Admiral Burke was briefed at meetings of the Special Group.

MR. KING: I remember very clearly. Not only was Admiral Burke present at the meeting on 17 March 1960 when we got our first approval, but within an hour or two afterward, the Navy operated so fast, someone was over in my office almost before I had returned.

QUESTION: Were they briefed on the Trinidad operation, however?

MR. ESTERLINE: The first briefing of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which I attended, did not get into anything such as an invasion attempt. This was way back in the summer. It was very general. Then there was one other briefing that I recall of the Joint Chiefs.

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QUESTION: Your proposal to OSO was to bring the JCS or other Services in on this amphibious operation?

MR. ESTERLINE: No, not the amphibious operation. At that time I simply felt the operation was going to be too big for the Agency to handle by themselves, and I felt it would be desirable to bring in the Defense Department, so they didn't come in with ruffled feelings at a later date, but OSO declined.

MR. ESTERLINE: Then later when we got into the amphibious operation the JCS were brought in. They evaluated our plan and then they had an inspection team that went down to Guatemala.

QUESTION: With regard to the resistance to the Trinidad Plan, did you consider that you were the chief spokesman of the military position, or did you look to or did you get any support from the Joint Chiefs?

MR. ESTERLINE: It was really a battle between political requirements and military requirements. You see that all the way through.

QUESTION: Who was the spokesman for the military requirements?

MR. ESTERLINE: I think you'd say CIA.

MR. DULLES: Were you present when they changed from Trinidad to Zapata?

MR. ESTERLINE: I certainly was.

QUESTION: Did you get any help from the Defense Department?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes, we got support from General Lemnitzer and General Gray.

QUESTION: How did you visualize the development of this landing if it wasn't successful in triggering popular uprisings fairly soon?

MR. ESTERLINE: I really and truly thought that this group would be able to maintain itself there for sometime because I thought that even if they didn't achieve the initial objective, they would be getting enough support from the resistance already there and/or the militia, and while it would be a difficult time for them, we would be able to drum up more aerial supplies or get some support from Defense which we had worked on, but regardless of which support they received, they would be able to sustain themselves there.

QUESTION: How were you going to resupply them?

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MR. ESTERLINE: We were going to take material in from Nicaragua. We had a large stock there, and just in case they might give us the right to use U.S. bases and U.S. pilots, we also had 500 tons of supplies at Opalocka, Florida which we didn't say too much about but which we had there just as a back-up. This included all sorts of supplies, food, weapons, and so on.

QUESTION: How many days of rations were with the Expeditionary Force?

MR. ESTERLINE: I believe they had about 30 days. However, we have this information readily available and we'll get it for you.

QUESTION: You felt that you could get shipping into the beach?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes. We felt this would not be too difficult.

QUESTION: As the operation approached, how did you feel about the problem of running this operation out of Washington?

MR. ESTERLINE: First, I always felt that the ideal way to run any operation of this sort is to be in close proximity to it, but we have learned from previous experience in other paramilitary operations, that the policy decision requirements are such that when you're away from Headquarters, you're really worse off. We considered this problem at some length, and finally decided to establish a communications center from which we operated.

QUESTION: How did you expect to get communications to know how the battle was going?

MR. ESTERLINE: Directly from the Brigade.

STATEMENT: I think the experience of anyone who has been in combat is that anyone that is fighting hasn't time to send out messages unless he has only that specific job to do.

MR. ESTERLINE: I think the most desirable thing would have been if I had been on one of the LCIs.

STATEMENT: Yes, but whether they have to send a message out to a boat 20 miles offshore or to Washington 2,000 miles away, the difference in time is really very little.

STATEMENT: Yes, but there's a difference in the feel.

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STATEMENT: One of the problems was that the President of the United States wasn't really aware of what was going on down south and had there been some command post closer to the operation, I think he would have.

MR. ESTERLINE: I might just add one additional thing in that regard; starting with the 16th, General Cabell or one of the other senior officers were in constant contact with the White House during the period of the operation. I can't say specifically at what moment the White House was notified of the criticality of the situation, but I know that they were notified of the criticality by either Mr. Bissell or General Cabell, and I can tell you that there's nothing we failed to transmit in terms of criticality because, frankly, I decided the operation was lost at midnight on the 16th. The next day I told Mr. King that I couldn't continue because we were lost.

QUESTION: What reports had you received on the results of the D-2 air strikes?

MR. ESTERLINE: That we had destroyed, in terms of percentages, about 50% of their air force. It was the best that we could determine. We were unclear in the analysis of our photography as to what fragmentation damage might have been done, but we assumed from the pattern of where the bombs had hit that fragmentation damage had been done to more aircraft than was readily apparent.

QUESTION: Then you know on the 16th that there were some aircraft still available to Castro?

MR. ESTERLINE: We knew on the 16th in the afternoon by 1900 that they had concentrated their remaining flyable aircraft at San Antonio. We had also determined that they had about 80 tanks lined up at Managua.

QUESTION: Were there any restrictions at that time on the D-Day strikes?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes, there were always restrictions on the number of aircraft.

QUESTION: What limitations were there on the D-Day strikes?

MR. ESTERLINE: We couldn't use more than two aircraft, as I recall, on

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any one target; but we would have. We would not have been specific in obeying that.

QUESTION: You could hit any military target, not only the airfields, but also Managua?

MR. ESTERLINE: Any target.

QUESTION: How about napalm?

MR. ESTERLINE: We were limited on the use of napalm, although I'll tell you very frankly that if we had struck Managua, we would have used napalm and we had our planes loaded with napalm for that strike only.

MR. ESTERLINE: The evening before D-Day at about 1900 we received a phone call which was the first indication that there was some question as to whether we were going to be allowed to make the D-Day air strike, and it was requested at this time that Mr. Bissell or someone else come over to the White House and discuss it. This was between 1900 and 2000 on the 16th. General Cabell was with us at the time and we immediately got a hold of Mr. Bissell and caucused for several hours.

QUESTION: Was this before or after General Cabell had been called by Mr. Bundy?

MR. ESTERLINE: Well, I guess General Cabell got the call first. The nature of my call was that the President had not understood that there was an air strike coupled with this and he did not want to do it unless there were some overriding considerations for doing it. This was not quite the way General Cabell got the word. Anyway, we immediately went into conversation with General Cabell.

QUESTION: This was before you went over to see Secretary Rusk?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes. We went into a pretty hot session; Captain Scapa was also there.

QUESTION: Was General Gray there?

MR. ESTERLINE: No.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Would you get General Cabell's paper? I'm not sure that the time fits here. General Taylor then quoted from General Cabell: "At about 9:30 P.M. on 16 April I was called by Mr. Bundy. He notified me

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that we would not be permitted to launch our strikes the next morning until they could be conducted from a strip on the beachhead. Any further consultation regarding this matter should be with the Secretary of State. I called the Secretary and asked him if I could come over and talk with him immediately. Mr. Bissell joined me at the Secretary's office and we arrived at 10:15."

MR. ESTERLINE: I may be off on my time. At any rate, we had a very violent discussion over what had happened and we spelled out as best we could to the General that we expected to lose every ship the next morning, and that this had to be understood. I don't recall exactly what time Mr. Bissell and the General came back, but Hawkins and Scappa were there at that time and we really got into a heavy discussion because the General said, "Well, let's see what we can work out with what we have. They're going to let you circle over the beachhead." We said, "Circling over the beachhead isn't going to do a damn bit of good, General, because the planes are all lined up at San Antonio and we can't do anything about it." Our aircraft are not designed to engage in aerial combat, and our whole operation has been predicated on destroying the enemy aircraft on the ground.

QUESTION: 100% on the ground?

MR. ESTERLINE: Just about.

QUESTION: The question has been asked several times as to why there weren't more antiaircraft guns, and this has been answered by stating that it was anticipated that all aircraft would be destroyed on the ground, and this led to no antiaircraft weapons in the beachhead area.

MR. ESTERLINE: That's right. I don't know whether we could have put antiaircraft weapons in that would have been effective against jet aircraft.

STATEMENT: I was amazed at how effective the 50 calibers were.

MR. ESTERLINE: If we had conducted our D-Day strikes as planned, I know we would have knocked out the tank force in Managua, and we would have destroyed at least a portion of the remaining aircraft. Considering this plus what the DLGAR destroyed the next day, there wouldn't have been much left for Castro to use against us. If we could have accomplished this, we would have piled the enemy tanks up as they came in along those roads, and they

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wouldn't have been able to use their artillery against us because of the flat country and the fact that they wouldn't have any planes in the air to direct the artillery fire.

QUESTION: When General Cabell and Mr. Bissell came back to the Command Post after learning that the D-Day strikes had been cancelled, what happened?

MR. ESTERLINE: It was after midnight when they came back, because at the time they gave us this information, the troops were already in the process of transferring into the LCU's. At that point, recall would have been impossible.

QUESTION: Would you have recalled it if you could?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes. I would have recalled the Brigade if it was within my power, because this was a delicate operation and we had calculated it down to such a fine point.

QUESTION: How did you assess the likelihood of success of Zapata just prior to D-Day?

MR. ESTERLINE: I thought we had better than a 50% chance of succeeding providing that we got all the support we were counting on.

QUESTION: What do you mean by succeeding?

MR. ESTERLINE: Establishing a firm beachhead which could sustain itself for a protracted period of time.

QUESTION: Would you please continue with what happened after you heard about the cancellation of the D-Day strikes?

MR. ESTERLINE: The General and the rest of us sat down, and I believe at that time General Cabell got in touch with General Gray, and we then tried to determine what we had left to protect the Brigade with. This conversation involved General Cabell, Mr. Bissell, Colonel Hawkins, Captain Scappa, and myself, and General Gray came in about a half hour after we started our discussion. Since it was clearly evident that we weren't going to be allowed to strike any of the strategic targets, General Cabell took the position that we should establish circles over the beachhead, two B-26s in echelon over the beachhead, hoping that we could contain any air that came against the force. However, it was decided that the circles over the beachhead really wouldn't accomplish anything. We finally decided that we did have authority to at least

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circle inland over what we believed was the principal route which Castro would use to come into the area. At the same time, we notified the Brigade that there would be Castro air that could be used against them, and told the fleet that they would have to be out by daylight.

QUESTION: You realized that they would not be unloaded by daylight?

MR. ESTERLINE: That's right, but we knew if they weren't out, we'd lose all the ships.

STATEMENT: Well, they would be partially unloaded in that every man would carry some equipment of his own. Some other things got off, as a matter of fact.

QUESTION: Will you cover General Cabell's presentation - the last paragraph of that?

MR. DULLES: Yes. "Our next task was to try to compensate for the loss of the air strikes in order to protect the shipping as it withdrew from the beachhead, I arranged with the Navy to stand by pending authority to provide air cover. At 4:30 A.M. 17 April, I called on the Secretary of State in his home and reiterated the need to protect the shipping. The Secretary telephoned the President and put me on the phone. After I made the request, the President asked that the Secretary be put back on. After the conversation with the President, the Secretary informed me that the request for air cover was disapproved."

STATEMENT: That action was taken by General Cabell to try and neutralize the air that would be available because of the cancellation of the air strikes.

QUESTION: Do you recall the circumstances surrounding the use of the aluminum boats? Up at Red Beach only two out of nine of the motors worked.

MR. ESTERLINE: These were all electric-starting engines. I'm sure all these engines were checked before they left. Now whether they were checked periodically on board the ship, I cannot answer.

MR. ESTERLINE: But there was ample time, really, for everyone to get ashore, because the catamarans were still operating. The primary problem was that they couldn't get the Fifth Battalion off the ship. The people on the HOUSTON just didn't want to go ashore. The Fifth Battalion was one of the

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last ones to be trained and the leadership was not very strong, nor was the outfit. Further, at the time the Fifth Battalion was organized, we were beginning to utilize marginal types.

QUESTION: Looking back, wasn't it a mistake to send that battalion in at that place?

MR. ESTERLINE: I think we felt they would get in to Red Beach with less trouble. They weren't expected to do much fighting, they were going to do a lot of pick and shovel back work.

QUESTION: Wasn't it expected that if there was an attack, the first attack would come on Red Beach?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes. Matter of fact, it was.

QUESTION: Will you tell us how you saw the D-Day landing from your Headquarters Command Post?

MR. ESTERLINE: Well, going back to the night before, we felt we were going to lose all our ships, so when the first reports came in, which said that the forces had landed at Blue Beach without too much difficulty, and that the landing had been accomplished at Red Beach, we were relieved and encouraged. We did not know initially that the troops had not disembarked from the HOUSTON.

QUESTION: In a strict sense, had they failed to comply with your orders to be out of the Bay by dawn?

MR. ESTERLINE: They were to be out beyond the 12-mile limit by dawn.

STATEMENT: Actually, they were within that. Therefore, that was in violation of orders.

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes, but with good reason.

STATEMENT: Yes, I wouldn't criticize that.

MR. ESTERLINE: As the day developed, it became apparent that we were in trouble, particularly from the jet air. All of this information, of course, was relayed by Mr. Bissell and General Cabell to the White House.

QUESTION: Did you relay any request for help?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes.

MR. ESTERLINE: One thing that puzzled us as the day developed, was that Pepe began asking for ammunition right away and we felt sure at that time that he had more ammunition than this indicated.

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MR. ESTERLINE: The next day we thought we could get a plane into the strip because they had sent word back that morning that the strip was clear and ready to go.

QUESTION: Do you know anything about Red Beach at that time?

MR. ESTERLINE: Only that they were engaged. By the end of the first day, I thought we would still be saved if we got some U.S. air support.

QUESTION: The air situation was the critical thing, ammunition had not loomed as the decisive determining factor?

MR. ESTERLINE: I don't think it had at that point. I think we still felt that they had ample but when they started requesting air support again the next morning, Hawkins and I felt they were probably dissipating their ammunition shooting at Castro's aircraft.

MR. ESTERLINE: On D-Day night the decision was made at the White House that the Navy would fly air cover, but not closer than 15 miles. On D+1 it was decided that the Navy would fly high air cover over the area.

QUESTION: Was the high cover authorized for other than the one hour cover?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes, they were to get one hour of air cover on the morning of the 19th. High air cover was authorized the day before.

MR. KING: It was never clear to us what the high cover was supposed to do. As I understood it at the time, there was to be a high air cover which was not to engage enemy aircraft, but which was to return fire.

QUESTION: During the naval planning, how much concern was there about the lighthouse?

MR. ESTERLINE: When we did our planning, we felt the ships would go far enough to the east that they would not be spotted by the lighthouse.

STATEMENT: Even if they had been sighted, it still wouldn't indicate where they were going to land.

STATEMENT: Our impression is that the invasion force achieved tactical surprise but that the whole island had already been alerted that something was coming by previous events and were all ready to react once something started.

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STATEMENT: Let me state my understanding of how the Brigade was briefed with regard to going guerrilla. The guerrilla alternative was never discussed below the battalion level because of morale problems. However, the battalion commanders were briefed to fall back to the water, and if they couldn't be evacuated this way, then they were to go guerrilla.

MR. ESTERLINE: I believe that is correct.

MR. ESTERLINE: I think the important thing here is the fact that all the Brigade officers were thoroughly trained in guerrilla operations.

STATEMENT: That's all right up to a point, but I would say that they contemplated getting themselves into a tactical situation which would practically prevent their going guerrilla.

QUESTION: Do you have any further comments on going guerrilla?

MR. ESTERLINE: In the case of either going guerrilla or being evacuated, air superiority was essential because it would give us the necessary time.

QUESTION: Why wasn't it decided to run ammunition into the beach on Monday night?

MR. ESTERLINE: There were a number of reasons. We knew by the evening hours about how much ammunition they had taken ashore and we made a calculation of how much shooting they had done. That night we considered trying to send ships back in or, if possible, to off-load into the LCUs and send them back in to discharge under cover of darkness and get out before daylight. When we determined the location of the ships, however, we realized that they did not have time to get back in under darkness. At the same time our representative, and I'm not sure whether it was Mr. Bissell or General Cabell, or both, went over to the White House and tried to get some sort of air cover to protect the ships in case they couldn't get out by daylight. Furthermore, we had always had a second priority resupply by air from Puerto Cabezas.

QUESTION: Was that a true plan or just an established capability?

MR. ESTERLINE: No, this was part of the plan. At any rate, the decision that came back from the White House was that we would get either reconnaissance or high cover, neither of which would meet our requirements. Consequently, I made the decision that night not to move the ships back in because we would

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lose them. There was an indication that Castro's planes were operating at night, and even without a full moon you can still see the outline of a ship, so the chances of successfully discharging the cargo were so minimal that I couldn't see the logic in making such a decision so long as we had the air resupply alternative.

STATEMENT: All you had was the BLAGAR and the BARBARA J, and they didn't have very much ammunition aboard, did they?

MR. ESTERLINE: I can tell you exactly what they had aboard. The BLAGAR had 42 tons of supplies, and the BARBARA J also had 42 tons of supplies. On the BLAGAR and the BARBARA J we had 1,000-man packs which included weapons as well as ammunition. As I said, this was a very marginal operation, so we decided to try and send in the air resupply instead of the ships, and we did drop some heavy weapon ammunition that night. The situation on D+1 was very discouraging, so Mr. Bissell and General Cabell went to the White House to try and get support again, because we knew by that time that our air was not going to cope with the problem. There were very lengthy conversations at the White House, but they didn't accomplish anything more than approval of what is referred to as an eyeball reconnaissance of the area. Meanwhile, we did get approval to use American pilots. In the late afternoon of D+1, one of our real old-timers led a Cuban group in and that was the strike that left 1800 dead. We, however, realized at this point that the ammunition supply was critical. We were in worse shape, however, as far as trying to try to get ships in because of Castro jets, and we had nothing to counteract it. Consequently, we laid on air drops for that night.

QUESTION: Was this the C-130 flight?

MR. ESTERLINE: No, this was not the C-130s. The approval for the C-130 operation was given so late that they could not arrive and be out of there under the cover of darkness, and it would be obvious that the C-130s belonged to the U.S. Had the approval been given 6 or 8 hours earlier, chances are we would have gotten in with a lot of ammunition. Following this, Mr. Bissell went to the White House knowing that unless we got active air support, we were

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through. When Mr. Bissell came back, he told us that we had a promise of one hour air cover for any hour that we chose, and we chose 6:30 to 7:30. There was a stipulation in it which enraged us and that was that we were to direct one of our officers to survey the beach. That put me right through the roof. At this late hour, for someone to say that we could have one hour of air, and that they wanted an American to go in and assess the situation. We did not accept the order that we would send Colonel Egan in to the beach. We did, however, immediately send out an order to Robertson and to Lynch saying that we needed a volunteer to go in and assess the beach during this period of one hour of air cover. They both volunteered. The trouble was, however, that they had lost the catamaran. So Mr. Robertson could not get in and out of the beach in the allotted time. We knew the Cuban pilots at this point were through, and so we issued orders for the American pilots to start flying into the area.

MR. ESTERLINE: We chose 6:30 to 7:30 because we felt that Castro's planes would be taking off someplace around the end of nautical twilight and that would put them over the target around 6:30, so we hoped the Navy would take care of them.

MR. ESTERLINE: On D Day night, it was very clear to me that the rules of engagement were such that I was not going to send those ships in because they weren't coming back, and even if I thought they could get in and get the stuff on the beach, I would have been inclined to make the same decision.

QUESTION: Why were you so sure that the same ships that had got out on D-Day under air attack were going to be sunk?

MR. ESTERLINE: I considered that this was luck. Furthermore, as you said, they didn't have a significant amount of the right kind of supplies and the LCUs were so slow that it was hopeless to put them in. There was also the question of whether the crews would mutiny if they were ordered in.

STATEMENT: It's easy to look back now, but if Mr. Bissell had told the President that night that these people have to get ammunition tonight or this thing collapses, I have the feeling that the President would have authorized the air cover for the ships.

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MR. ESTERLINE: From my point of view, I cannot see how the President of the United States was not aware of the criticality of this situation starting with the 16th and continuing until the fall of the beachhead, because Mr. Bissell and General Cabell were in constant conversation with the White House.

STATEMENT: Nevertheless, it seems to me that they would have extended this one hour period to a few more hours if they had known it was absolutely essential to get the ships in and out of there.

MR. ESTERLINE: When Mr. Bissell came back, he said they had promised us one hour -- no more -- and that there was no use in asking for any more.

QUESTION: Do you have anything else you'd like to call attention to?

MR. ESTERLINE: I seriously question the ability of the U.S. Government or people or agencies of the U.S. Government to successfully conduct this kind of operation under the modus operandi which exists today.

STATEMENT: I quite agree with you.

MR. ESTERLINE: When you go into an operation that has to be plausibly deniable, you have to make a lot of assumptions. First, you are not going to be able to use Americans to the extent that you should. Second, you are not going to be able to use the most modern weapons of war. Restrictions of this sort permit casualty rates which are high; however, having accepted this kind of limitation, you must be able to move within your plan with complete freedom, because you have already limited yourself. Consequently, you must be able to use to their fullest those assets that you do have. I guess what I'm really saying is that I'm not convinced from what I have seen during the last year that we have the intestinal fortitude to embark upon a plan and pursue it to success. We can talk about what things we might have done, but this is not the root of the problem. The thing that is really destroying us is that we have to get certain things ironed out cold before you start.

QUESTION: As a practical matter, how can we get this realization across to those who influence these decisions?

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MR. ESTERLINE: As long as decisions by professionals can be set aside by people who know not whereof they speak, you won't succeed.

QUESTION: With regard to the perfect solution to this problem, I gather you feel a policy should be laid down which would authorize the Agency to execute this sort of an operation within certain parameters, and which would authorize something like minimum involvement of U.S. forces, and then put a field commander at the scene of operations.

MR. ESTERLINE: This, I agree with. However, under the rules under which we were operating, a field commander would have been very little help. Under the parameters you suggest, however, certainly put your commander in the field.

MR. ESTERLINE: Maybe we wouldn't have succeeded ultimately, but we would still be there right now if we had had the full use of the capability that we had created and had confidence in.

QUESTION: The JCS team that went down to the camps made the evaluation that there was about an 85% chance that the secrecy would be blown. Were any attempts made to overcome this situation?

MR. ESTERLINE: This was really one of the inherent difficulties in this whole operation. The way we tried to cover it involved the complete cooperation of the Guatemalan government and we tried physical security, which we did our best to maintain. This was a difficult job because we had an air base in one area; we had a maneuver area; and then we had our main base where we kept most of our Cubans up in the mountains. We tried to maintain tight security in the mountains. As far as the air base was concerned, it was fairly out in the open, and this was because it was the only practical location that we could find. Everything that was conducted there was under the guise of the Guatemalan government and theoretically we were checking out Guatemalan pilots. We tried to the limit of our ability, and we had security officers all over the base, to enforce enough physical security to enable this cover to hold up. This was not the most satisfactory thing in the world. When you take a lot of hot-blooded Cubans, it's pretty hard to shut them up and not let them get out, and to say that some of them did not get out at night would not be true, because they did. But particularly

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as concerns the Nicaraguan operation which was going to be the staging base, we did everything possible there. Somoza covered this as his own operation completely. We kept no Cubans in the Nicaraguan area until just before the operation. We had a very limited number of Americans there, really less than we would have liked, and Somoza moved in elements of his own military to provide the guards. Five days before we moved anybody into Nicaragua Somoza clamped complete security controls on the area to the extent that nobody moved in or out of Puerto Cabezas; either by commercial or military air; all communications were cut off with the rest of the country, and anything that went in or out to other countries in Latin America or to the United States was monitored. I might say that one message was smuggled out that we know about. It went to an office in Boston. It said there was unusual activity going on vis-a-vis the ships at Puerto Cabezas, but fortunately this message came to us and we buttoned it up right away. To the best of my knowledge, we moved all the people of the Brigade from Guatemala over a three-day period to Nicaragua, put them into the ships, and got them to the area without any security break either in Guatemala or Nicaragua. Now at the time we were loading them in Guatemala, we were also loading other troops and we had other Cubans there. The Guatemalans were transferring troops back and forth on the roads we were using, and also we did have something under 200 Cubans who were still undergoing training at that time. So I think the actual movement was fairly successful, but there was no getting away from the fact that in any Latin American country with the shrinking of the world through improved communications, it's not really the best way to do it. I would recommend that if we or the United States reconstitute something like this, it should be on U.S. soil so that we can better control the security.

MR. DULLES: I've never been very clear on the whole basis of the decision on using American personnel on the ships. I have a paper here where I asked these questions, and I don't know where we were under any prohibitions except a general one about keeping the Americans off the ships. They could be military personnel. Could you throw any light on that?

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MR. ESTERLINE: Yes. With regard to pilots, we never had any approval until the very last moment to use American airmen. As far as the ships were concerned, the first ground rules laid down came from the Special Group that we couldn't really use any Americans at all. Then we got a relaxation of this to the point that we were allowed to use contract Americans on our direct infiltration operations, but they were not allowed to go into the beach, and this applied to the BARBARA J and the BLAGAR which were being used for direct infiltration at that time. This was not an untenable arrangement because we were not really taking our ships into the beaches at that time. In most of our rendezvous the transfers took place 3 miles out at sea. We used the BLAGAR on several operations of that kind prior to the invasion, but we were never allowed at any time by U.S. policy to put Americans in on the beach and that's the principal reason we didn't put Americans on the ATLANTICO and the CARIBE.

QUESTION: Yet, Lynch and Robertson went ashore. Was this beyond the authorization?

MR. ESTERLINE: Yes, it was beyond the authorization.

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**MAR 22 2000**

**PROPAGANDA ACTION PLAN IN SUPPORT OF MILITARY FORCES**

(D-Day until the fall of the Castro regime)

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2/7/00, bcl

On D-Day the ~~USMC~~ propaganda campaign will enter its action stage.

Priorities will be established by military considerations and all activities directed at Cuba will be in support of military objectives. All propaganda directed to countries other than Cuba will be guided by political action considerations.

The two primary propaganda mechanisms used during the action phase will be radio and leaflet dispersion. However, preparations have been made to utilize captured media, such as newspapers and printing facilities.

The objectives of the propaganda action phase will be to assist military and political action developments; such as,

Strategically:

- To maintain morale of anti-Castro fighting forces.
- To instruct pro-patriot forces, and tell them how to join the fight.
- To intimidate pro-Castro forces; to make them defect or become panic-stricken, confused, and uncertain.
- To present the desired picture of the internal fighting to world opinion. (Minimizing U.S. participation).
- To counteract Sino-Soviet propaganda and negate international Soviet support.
- To appeal to other governments and peoples for support through the dramatic presentation of declarations of the fighting forces and new government.

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Tactically:

To instruct individuals, telling them how and where they can join fighting forces.

To announce the common purpose of military fighting and civic resistance.

Instruct the populace how to fight in place (sab instructions, call to general strike, etc.).

To deceive the opposition, causing wasteful action and movement of troops, (including a pre-D-Day deception).

To provide a means of giving tactical instructions to patriot forces without communication channels.

To provoke fence-sitters into joining "the winning side".

To cause interference to opposition forces. (Example: Headquarters is aware that government reinforcements are nearing Santa Clara to join the local garrison, by road X from Trinidad. The radio can warn inhabitants of Santa Clara of impending danger from battle or bombing, then say the only safe road out of town is road X. Warn them to leave by that road, carrying all the possessions they can.)

To persuade local populations to support military operations.

(Example: Aircraft crews find they need the lights of Havana as a check point for drop missions. But a blackout is enforced. . . Thus the radio explains the problem and asks patriots to put lighted candles in tin cans, placed on roofs or in patios.)

To intimidate so as to obtain local support. (Example: The people are frightened to place the candles mentioned above. The radio says: "We will bomb only military targets. This will be easy in spite of the blackout because only on military installations are there no candles to guide us."

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Thus, we can bomb only those areas where there are no candles."

## II

### THEMES

The basic D-Day themes are reflected in the D-Day leaflet, a draft of which is attached. (Annex A).

Until further information is available, detailed theme treatment of the action phase will not be formulated. However, probable themes are outlined in an attachment. (Annex B).

## III

### RADIO

(Broadcasts from outside Cuba)

#### Medium Wave:

Radio Swan: Present political programs will be eliminated, and the best talent of each program will be utilized by "Unity Program", under direct control of <sup>MIAMI</sup> ~~WFO~~. (Program made once a day; relayed by telephone wire to WRUL for shortwave broadcast; picked up by Swan and rebroadcast the same night.) This will be <sup>MIAMI'S</sup> ~~SWAN'S~~ operation. The present "news and commentary" program originating in New York will also be continued. (Sent by commercial shortwave to Swan for rebroadcast the same day.) This will be Headquarters' outlet on Swan for editorial treatment. Except for the love programs, the remainder of Swan broadcasting will consist of music and <sup>MIAMI</sup> ~~MIAMI~~ news produced on the island by the ~~SWAN~~ team. Headquarters and ~~SWAN~~ will be in OPIM contact with Swan to guide and control this key output. (It is estimated that a propaganda line requested by Headquarters or <sup>MIAMI</sup> ~~SWAN~~ will be

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on the air within one hour.)

In addition to the above "commercial" operation of Swan, there will be a clandestine program, ostensibly originating within Cuba, at least twice a day on Swan. Of course, these will not be on Swan regular frequency. Statements made on this program can be replayed on "commercial" Swan as "orders from the rebel command headquarters."

WHS: This commercial station in Miami operates at 50 K.W. power, making it as strong as Swan, and audible throughout Cuba. Although it will largely confine itself to legitimate coverage "for the Latin's residing in Florida" control and placement will be effected through its sponsor, the Cuban Freedom Committee, and through Headquarters' liaison with the owner.

WMT: The regular ~~AMERICAN~~ program on this station, heard in northern Cuba, is under control of WFO. To be used for editorial treatment desired by WAVE, and to inject rumors into Miami Cuban population.

WKRP: It is hoped that the Cuban Freedom Committee will, by D-Day, sponsor news and music--a mild "Tokyo Rose" operation--from this Key West station. Due to its unique position at one end of the radio dial, this station is heard in Havana easily, and much of Cuba. Control will be through the Cuban Freedom Committee and the owner.

ARMY BOAT: The craft carries a medium wave transmitter. Handled by MIAMI. There is a commo link with the boat, so last minute changes can be made at any time. The ~~radio~~ broadcasts will operate off of Havana in initial days of the invasion. Once a reasonably denied area is obtained, it will go into a nearby cove or inlet and broadcast as an instrument of the rebel forces. Chief value here is the ability of the boat to move up and down the coast according to military needs.

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Short Wave:

Radio Swan: Programs described previously will be simulcast or re-broadcast by Swan on short wave. These will be heard in Cuba in spite of any jamming attempts. (The GOC does not have the equipment or sophistication to completely jam this powerful short wave; furthermore, special equipment on the island will allow countermeasures.)

WRUL: <sup>MANA!</sup> The ~~WRUL~~-controlled Unity Program, described above, is first broadcast on this powerful facility, heard in Cuba easily, and in all of Latin America.

[REDACTED] A program heard in Cuba is broadcast nightly on short wave facilities [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The program pretends to originate from a boat at sea, but is actually taped. [REDACTED] (It is also broadcast medium wave, but this will not reach Cuba.)

[REDACTED] beams short wave programs [REDACTED] (This transmitter was purchased [REDACTED])

[REDACTED] A regular commercial station will broadcast short wave (and medium). [REDACTED]

Radio Independiente: This is long-active short wave boat operation. <sup>MANA!</sup> [REDACTED] is in contact with program producers. The boat is under the control of Tony Varona. Broadcasts three times a day with messages directed to official military listeners.

Broadcasting From Within Cuba:

The [REDACTED] now provides a unique clandestine broadcast in the city of Havana, using a mobile transmitter to project voice messages

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through dormant TV channels. [REDACTED]

Other prop teams planning infiltration into Cuba will carry Viking transmitters with them. Hopefully, at least one will be in place and broadcasting truly clandestine programs by D-Day.

The invasion force will be equipped with a Viking transmitter, in the expectation that it can broadcast directly from its denied area within the country. If so, these broadcasts will be picked up [REDACTED] and replayed into Cuba and throughout the world.

NOTE:

It is possible that following D-Day there will be an interruption in electrical power so that regular radio sets will be inoperative. In any event, it is probable that fighting forces will have to depend on battery or generator-powered sets.

It is planned to provide fighting troops with small transistor battery-powered sets which can be carried in the pocket or on a chain around the neck. Fighting elements with which we are not in contact will be supplied by air drops of transistors hung from brightly colored parachutes. All material drops will contain at least some transistors and battery replacements.

IV

LEAFLETS

Regular pre-invasion leaflet drops will be stepped up shortly before D-Day. Generally, they will stimulate and incite the population for the beginning of fighting, but will tend to mislead on where it will occur.

D-Day Leaflet: This is the key message of the D-Day propaganda operation.

The leaflet will have to be concise and yet answer all possible questions for Cuba and the rest of the world. It will be a statement from the military leader (roughly in the form of Eisenhower's D-Day statement).

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If a leader is not available, the leaflet must be from the "Consejo" or whatever ruling group is in command.

It is understood that weather, accident, or low priority on available aircraft may preclude the actual dropping of the leaflet. Whether it is dropped or not, the claimed leaflet will be the basis for the first D-Day broadcasts and first treatment of the invasion by the world press. (It should be noted that the possibility of leaflet dropping facilities which could be used but would not deprive FM of aircraft are being investigated.)

The D-Day leaflet must provide terse, dramatic answers to the following questions:

Who comprises the force: (The patriots who have been active within Cuba have been joined by more non-Batista, non-foreign Cubans who are exercising the right to return to their native land).

What will the force do? (Overthrow Castro and the Communists who have enslaved Cuba.)

Why are they going to do it? (For a democratic Cuba, "Por una sola America".)

How are they going to achieve it? (By joining with all Cubans to carry out war against the tyrant.)

How are those who hear the message to cooperate? (By general instructions to militia, military, civil population.

Steps to be taken against the tyrant, support to be given to the rebel patriots.)

When? (Right now. Until the tyrant falls.)

An Appeal for support must open and close the message, with a dramatic presentation of the battle slogan which will be used in all subsequent m

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sages. Probably this can be something like: "To arms! For a Free Cuba and a Single America!"

(See Attachment for draft of leaflet.)

D-Day plus 1 Leaflet: This will be the first specific instruction to the military and militia. Why they must defect. How they do it. What they must do to their equipment or how they can foul up the service that they manage. How they can insure their life, and that of their families. Delicately intimidating, hopefully promising that they can play a glorious role in the overthrow of the tyrant.

D-Day plus 2 Leaflet: This will be the first specific instruction to the general populace. Following the general outline above, with messages geared for women, youth, workers, etc. Civil resistance and production sabotage. What radios to listen to for guidance.

Target of Opportunity Leaflets: Unlike the above three leaflets, which will be prepared beforehand, subsequent leaflets will be written according to developments in the fighting. They may be directed only to the inhabitants of single towns, or to a single army unit. They may be signed by the secondary patriot leader in a particular area. They may be in the form of "amnesty passes" so soldiers can surrender or defect with impunity. (Production of these leaflets will be from emergency printing facilities previously arranged.)

V

USE OF CAPTURED MEDIA

Two newspaper-radio teams are being trained for combat infiltration. The teams will be editorially and technically competent to operate any

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captured newspaper plant, or to operate and prepare programming for local radio stations. In addition, the present military force includes a team capable of operating a radio transmitter for propaganda purposes. This team now broadcasts [REDACTED]

VI

GENERAL PROPAGANDA SUPPORT

Should military action be extended over a long period of time, the radio and leaflet operations previously described will be augmented by all the regular propaganda apparatus. This will include press placement throughout the hemisphere [REDACTED] through Miami exile contacts with Florida papers; and through Headquarters placement directly [REDACTED]

The latter capability deserves special comment. For in spite of all elaborate planning to reach the Cuban people and the rest of the world directly, it is the output [REDACTED]

One report [REDACTED] will be repeated on nearly every radio station and most of the newspapers of the Caribbean area.

Because of the importance of this, military planners should be aware of Headquarters capability of placing items directly [REDACTED]

During a period of fighting, especially in the first few days after D-Day, we will be in a position to place specific messages and propaganda lines. This will be enormously important in influencing the actions of Cuban government leaders and stimulating sympathetic support of the patriotic rebellion from other countries.

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ANNEX A

TODAY

THE PATRIOTS WHO HAVE BEEN FIGHTING IN OUR HILLS AND CITIES FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS WERE REINFORCED TODAY BY AN ARMY OF LIBERATION. THE BATTLE FOR A FREE CUBA AND AN UNDIVIDED AMERICA HAS BEGUN. ADELANTE!

----

This morning a large force of free Cubans--the same Cubans who once fought to dispose of Batista--have joined the courageous fighters in the hills. It is a force without foreigners, an army of Cubans who are returning to their own country to save the Revolution from atheistic Communism.

-----

The army of liberation has come to topple Castro the tyrant and rout the Communists who have betrayed our country. It will give to the people the freedoms they fought for before but which were taken from them by Castro.

----

The army of liberation has come for two reasons: for a free Cuba and for an undivided America.

-----

Victory is inevitable if all recent Cubans join the army of liberation in body and spirit. The red tyrants will crumble before the might and wrath of united citizens.

Militiaman:--Now is the time to turn your guns!

Soldier:--Now is the hour to prove your allegiance to your Country!

Student:--Let the books fall so the tyrant will fall!!

Citizen:--Make the streets your fields of glory!

Let no vehicles run--no wires carry their current--no roads support their traffic--no machines turn--no food get to market--no night be without violence.

Listen to the clandestine radios for your instructions.

THE BATTLE BEGINS NOW. ON THIS DAY EACH CUBAN WILL BECOME A PATRIOT OR A TRAITOR. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT IS AT HAND. NIGHTFALL IS TOO LATE FOR YOUR DECISION. JOIN THE FORCES OF VICTORY SO THAT YOU WILL SHARE IN THE GLORY OF THE NEW CUBA--A FREE CUBA AND AN UNDIVIDED AMERICA.

CONSEJO GENERAL

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ANNEX B

POSSIBLE THEMES FOR D-DAY PERIOD

- Cubans reinforcing internal Cuban opposition: -- "We" are non-Batista Cubans. We are not foreigners. We arrive to reinforce existing brave patriot forces already in the hills who have been fighting Cuban government tyranny for many months.
- Nucleus of original anti-Batista rebels now anti-Castro: -- We count among us and among those in hills many who were at Castro's side against Batista's tyranny and who are now fighting Castro's tyranny.
- Not an invasion: -- This is not an outside, foreign invasion. We are Cubans. We were forced as individuals to leave the house of the tyrant and now are organized and armed and back to help oust the tyrant.
- Earlier martyrs paved the way: -- We are but the final and crowning Cuban force to crush the Communist dictatorship. Before us students, soldiers, workers, and other martyrs have already paved the way and shed their blood to make our arrival possible.
- Erase scourge of Communism: -- Now that you have felt the heel of a negative Soviet, Asiatic, foreign, Communist regime, you know how necessary it is to erase it forever in Cuba.
- Respect for Cuban fighters: -- Don't let the government call us "imperialists" or "mercenaries". You know that we are Cubans fighting Cuba's battle against foreigners like Che, the Soviets, and the Communist Chinese. Whereas, the government crushed some other opposition brutally before, the government leaders now know they have more than met their match. No government propaganda can hide the truth of inevitable victory by Cubans over Communists.
- Our military action part of great overall resistance movement: -- While we go about our part of the job, we know we are joining a great wave of resistance by all decent, patriotic Cubans, men and women, to eliminate the cancer and build Cuba anew. Special salute to any visible opposition group at time of D-Day.
- Applause of all America. Reunite Cuba and Americas: -- We are not the puppets of anyone, but we have the sympathy and applause of all America, north and south to help redeem Cuba for the Americas.
- Those who betrayed original revolution: -- The current government leaders betrayed the people who originally supported the revolution. Let's get that original movement back on the right track. We are not out to destroy the revolution but only to destroy the destroyers of the original revolution.
- Today is day of decision, not -- Mark well. Now is the time when all Cubans prove themselves to be patriots or traitors. We will be

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tomorrow:

lenient to all who now show they are really Cubans and aid in the liberation uprising, be they militiamen, government employees, or campesinos. But woe to the traitors.

Religious crusade:

-- As the early Christians finally won out over the infidels, so will we. Devout, pray for victory. Recall fish symbol significance.

Batista and Batistianos far away:

-- Batista and his chieftains are far away in other lands and have nothing to do with this great military and civil movement. Don't believe government lies on this subject. (Name resistance leaders who obviously non-Batistianos.)

Star versus Star:

-- Battle line is clearcut. Cuban star and proud banner versus Soviet red star and the hammer and sickle.

Reassurance to fence-sitter with vested interest in regime:

-- No Cuban now cultivating own plot of land for self and family or living in newly built house in town or country will lose same after liberation. We will always respect honest toil and human rights.

Wish grisly job of overthrow quickly and get on to job of building Cuba:

-- Let's get military job over with quickly so we can heal wounds of Cuban family and build a new Cuba out of ashes.

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CLASSIFICATION  
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DECLASSIFICATION AND/OR  
RELEASE OF THIS DOCUMENT  
for 1/7/00

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON  
TWENTY-FIRST MEETING  
30 MAY 1961

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. KENNEDY

MR. DULLES (WITNESS)

ADMIRAL BURKE

COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT. COLONEL TARNWATER

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MR. DULLES

(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

QUESTION: Was there any doubt about the requirement for military action against Castro?

MR. DULLES: There was no doubt as far as I can recall in the mind of anyone including the White House, State, Defense, and ourselves, as to the need for action against Castro, and the feeling was that probably military action was the only kind of action that could be effective.

QUESTION: In your own mind, how did you evaluate the probability of success?

MR. DULLES: I realized the operation was a risky one; that you could not insure success; but I rated reasonably high, certainly 50% or over, the probability of being able to effect a beachhead and to hold it for a considerable period of time.

QUESTION: What was your estimate of the possibility of an uprising following the invasion?

MR. DULLES: I never gave a great deal of weight to the idea of a large popular uprising. I viewed it in this way: that if one had the beachhead and the airbases, we would then be able to resupply pockets of resistance in various parts of Cuba, thereby getting arms in the hands of a great many anti-Castro people. I don't believe in popular uprisings by unarmed people when you have a military force in being, such as the militia. I did not rate the militia very highly as an organized fighting force. It was, however, entirely effective against unarmed civilians. I never felt that we should call for an uprising or that we should expect or desire an immediate popular uprising. I had had a great deal of experience during the war in France when I was working with the French underground, and I remembered how hard we had tried to keep the French from waging frontal battles against the Germans; they would do it from time

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to time and then they would get cut to pieces and I was very much impressed with that experience.

QUESTION: You viewed the development of this operation as the maintenance of a beachhead for a rather indefinite period and then using the beachhead as a base for infiltration of additional weapons and that sort of thing?

MR. DULLES: I hoped that we could expand the beachhead and that we could spread out into areas over toward Trinidad and toward the Escambray -- that if the first encounter with the hard core of pretty well trained militia were successful, I thought we would then be in a very good position to enlarge the beachhead and to get substantial accretion. I recognized that Zapata was a very difficult area to get into, but I still thought they would be able to make contact with a more populous area and be able to build up their beachhead.

QUESTION: Were you surprised by the rate of reaction of the Castro forces?

MR. DULLES: I was surprised by the effectiveness of their aircraft. However, I realized that since we were making the invasion in an area that was relatively near Havana, and to the various tank brigades, that within possibly 15 or 20 hours, you could expect pretty effective reaction against the beachhead.

STATEMENT: Coming back to the expectation of a general uprising, Allen had a completely different view of that than the Chiefs had.

RESPONSE: Yes, I note that.

MR. DULLES: I said I did not attach importance to an immediate uprising. We were not able to call upon the people for an uprising until we had a beachhead -- until we had something for them to do, and until we armed them. I don't believe in an uprising of unarmed people when the opposition has a substantial number of armed men that can be fairly effective against unarmed civilians. I felt that what would be accomplished was a beachhead that would provide a place from which we could easily

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arm various pockets of resistance in the Escambray. I felt that anything like a general uprising was not in the cards and was probably not desirable initially.

QUESTION: What was your intention with regard to calling for an uprising had the beachhead been established firmly for several days?

MR. DULLES: We had no definite plan on that. It would have depended upon the effect of the invasion on the Cuban people and a good many other considerations.

STATEMENT: It might have been the pressure of the time, but I know the President kept after Dick Bissell about the uprising and Dick Bissell stated on the first day that it was going to happen that night.

MR. DULLES: That particular day we had asked the underground to try and accentuate acts of sabotage and there were important acts of sabotage in the period immediately preceding the landing.

RESPONSE: Yes, but just after the landings, maybe I misunderstood about the uprisings, maybe it was acts of sabotage. But at any rate, he indicated they were going to happen after the landing.

MR. DULLES: We did expect that after the landing, there would be increased sabotage because we would be more able to supply them with the means to carry out acts of sabotage, and we hoped there would be some defections from the militia to the underground after the landing.

STATEMENT: Well, we certainly spent a lot of effort getting extra arms ready for those that would join the force.

RESPONSE: Yes, for 30,000 men I believe it was.

MR. DULLES: That's a different thing. I thought you were talking about uprisings throughout Cuba. If you're talking about accretions to the underground and some accretion to the beachhead, particularly if they were able to break out from the beachhead, I think there probably would have been several thousand accretions

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in the beachhead merely from the population in the beachhead area, and I think the evidence we have will bear that out.

QUESTION: Were there several thousand in this beachhead?

MR. DULLES: There were pretty close to that -- I'm thinking about the civilian population as well as the military.

STATEMENT: The figure of 30,000 indicates to me that someone was planning on a massive uprising someplace; on getting people to use these weapons. Would that be a fair comment, Admiral?

ADMIRAL BURKE: Yes. We expected some accretions from the beachhead but not very many, because CIA originally had 5,000 additional arms and then the Secretary of Defense increased this.

MR. DULLES: I think that the Secretary of Defense wanted these weapons as a standby capability. I believe this was a very wise standby action that was taken.

QUESTION: What was your understanding of the attitude of the JCS on the Zapata plan?

MR. DULLES: Very much as has been reported here. They preferred Trinidad. It was my understanding however that they accepted Zapata as a possibility. One of the papers that was prepared and distributed during the high-level meetings seemed to me to indicate, and I thought it was prepared at least with the military people who were working with us, that those people thought that Zapata was in some respects better than Trinidad.

QUESTION: Is that a paper that Mr. Bissell prepared?

MR. DULLES: Yes. But those statements were all prepared with the military staff that was with us. This is the paper of the 16th of March -- two operations had been proposed -- the T operation and the Z operation. Balance of advantage. The T operation has higher likelihood of prompt success but higher risk: (1) in landing and (2) in early counterattack against beachhead. The Z operation has lower risk; less shock effect, and therefore less chance of quick success; equal chance of ultimate success. The T operation absolutely requires tactical air support and does not require air bases. Balance strongly favors Z.

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ADMIRAL BURKE: The Joint Chiefs did not agree to that position.

MR. DULLES: No, I think that's true, but it was prepared with Colonel Hawkins and the military staff that had been assigned to us.

STATEMENT: I think that must be where Mr. McNamara got his impression that the Chiefs really preferred the Zapata plan.

QUESTION: Were you satisfied with the air plan as finally approved for Zapata?

MR. DULLES: I never considered myself a military expert. I deferred very largely on these matters to the military people. I'm not trying to shed any responsibility here because I assume full responsibility, but as a practical matter I am not a military man; I never got beyond being a Private in Company L in the New Jersey Militia.

STATEMENT: You're the only man in Washington that admits that he is not a military man.

MR. DULLES: Throughout this, I was one of those responsible for getting military men into our shop. We did not have a naval fellow for a long while, and I went down to look over our small boat operations to Cuba, and I thought they were lousy. So I came back and said you have to have a naval fellow here to advise on this operation, and we got Captain Scappa. I had asked General Cabell as a high Air Force officer, and again I don't want to shift any responsibility but just to give you the background, to follow closely the air side of the operation, and I deferred very largely to him on these matters. I realized however that you can't have amphibious landings if the other side has control of the air.

QUESTION: Do you recall whether or not Ambassador Willauer raised the point in the Special Group that he thought jet planes should be brought in to provide air cover for the B-26s?

MR. DULLES: I don't specifically recall that. Does the record bear that out?

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RESPONSE: Yes, it shows that it was discussed.

MR. DULLES: Well, I wouldn't have been at all surprised. It was generally in line with my own thoughts on the matter.

QUESTION: Mr. Willauer said it was rejected by State on the grounds that it could not be fitted in with the covert requirements.

MR. DULLES: And it would have to be American, because due to distances, there was no way we could maintain an air cover from Nicaragua. We had ruled out the idea that we could call upon or rely upon American support.

QUESTION: I gather you thought you had surrounded yourself with air and military experts whom you had expected to watch this aspect and since you didn't hear any loud cries from them, you assumed the air situation was adequately taken care of.

MR. DULLES: That's right.

MR. DULLES: My idea of the Zapata D-Day air plan was that these airstrips would be secured around one or two o'clock in the morning and that therefore it could be maintained that strikes made after that time had originated from these fields; consequently the air strikes could have been conducted at dawn.

ADMIRAL BURKE: That's exactly right. That was our understanding.

QUESTION: Would you remind us of when you left and when you returned?

MR. DULLES: Yes, sir. I left Washington around 3 o'clock, Saturday afternoon before D-Day. I returned to Friendship Airport about one o'clock in the morning on D+1. I was met there by some of my people who brought the reports to me of what had transpired on D-Day. It was unfortunate, and probably unwise to have been away. However, I had planned this for over a year. I was sort of the main attraction for this particular group. If I had dropped out at the last moment, unless I had gone to bed or a hospital, or feigned some illness, it would have been noted very clearly and would have been related to what was about

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to happen. I did consult some of my own people and I did advise the White House. I did not take it up in detail so they had no responsibility for saying, yes, go, but I did advise them that I was going, and I went. Now, looking back on it, it was a mistake. I had assumed though that there probably would be no change in the plan. I knew that the ships were to rendezvous the next night and that all the plans had been made and I did not anticipate any change in the plans until I could be back.

QUESTION: Do you recall the situation they portrayed to you at Friendship when you came in?

MR. DULLES: It was tragic.

QUESTION: How did they describe the situation?

MR. DULLES: They indicated that the invasion had failed.

QUESTION: Would you tell us your understanding of the guerrilla alternative at Zapata

MR. DULLES: I realized that the guerrilla alternative at Zapata was not as good as in Trinidad. However, I did not entirely exclude it. We had had reports from people that we believed were reliable that there were about 100 guerrillas not far away that might join up with those advance parachute troops that we were sending in.

QUESTION: Did you have a strong impression, as the President did, that this was really an out -- that this operation could not be very disastrous because if worse came to worst, the group could go into the hills and become guerrillas?

MR. DULLES: I did think there was quite a number who would go through the swamp and take up guerrilla activities. I don't think I ever thought that the major part of the force could get to the Escambray. That I did not think was likely, unless the landing was really a complete success and you had eliminated to a large extent the opposition coming down on those three roads so that you would have a chance to get out.

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QUESTION: What about water evacuation? Did you give that serious consideration as a possible alternative?

MR. DULLES: I felt that if the beachhead was established and we had control of the air and it was decided then that there was no future to the beachhead, then water evacuation was a possibility.

QUESTION: It was more of a deliberate decision after a successful landing rather than an emergency action?

MR. DULLES: Yes, that's right.

QUESTION: On the night of D+1, how clear of a picture did you have of the ammunition situation?

MR. DULLES: When I arrived at Friendship Airport, I was given an extremely discouraging view as to the situation at Red Beach. I did not at that time realize that Blue Beach was in the same situation. There was a potential shortage at Blue Beach, but the shortage that was reported was at Red Beach.

QUESTION: By the end of that day, D+1, do you recall your picture of the situation?

MR. DULLES: It was desperate.

QUESTION: Do you want to comment on the non-attribution factor we've talked about so much?

MR. DULLES: Well, as I've said before, it seemed to me that a major mistake was not having recognized as early as November that the non-attribution character of this operation had been lost. Then or shortly thereafter the press articles began to appear about the training, and it was then that the decision was made to move from a guerrilla operation which was characteristic of a really covert operation, into a more strictly military operation. I think it's quite clear that at that time I had the duty to make it apparent to higher authority that the operation had lost its covert character. I think possibly that this was not done, because we were all discussing these developments in the 5412 Committee and later with President Eisenhower and still later with President Kennedy. However, I didn't say,

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now this is a new type of operation; we have to look at it in a new way; and I did not make that clear to President-elect Kennedy when Bissell and I briefed him in November in Palm Beach, nor later during the various meetings at the White House in March.

QUESTION: Were you aware of any effort to sell this operation by these enthusiastic young operators who were planning it?

MR. DULLES: Well, I'm always conscious of the fact, it's come up so many times in our work, that the proponents of an operation always try to sell it. It's part of human nature. They spend a lot of time developing a plan, and they are enthusiastic about its possibilities. Yes, I think I was aware of their trying to sell the operation because we've always had it. It's inherent in this type of operation. At the same time, I realized that the Agency had the final responsibility for the operation. I think I was too prone to deprecate my own military judgment. I should have exercised more of my own judgment in pointing out clearly to the President certain of the features which have been brought out in these discussions. The President once did ask me directly whether he should go ahead on this. I said I'd give it further study. I wasn't ready to approve it then because of the difficulty we were having in obtaining naval cover. Later, this was worked out and I recommended that we go ahead; so I take full responsibility there.

QUESTION: General Cabell and Mr. Bissell seemed to feel that they were directed to take up all operational matters with the Secretary of State.

MR. DULLES: Yes, that was our general view, that Mr. Rusk spoke for the President with regard to policy considerations which permitted or inhibited certain types of actions. Let me go back to the fact that on the 5412 Committee we looked to State representatives to tell us whether this could or couldn't be done.

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QUESTION: Do you think that after D-Day, CIA did not have direct access to the President?

RESPONSE: General Cabell and Mr. Bissell would say, yes, but their understanding of procedure was that the Secretary of State was acting on these things in the name of the President.

MR. KENNEDY: I just note that I was there during those few days and they were in continuous presence. Mr. Bissell was talking with the President practically continuously. All the decisions that were made, were made by the President. They weren't made by Dean Rusk.

STATEMENT: Yes, but I gather that when D-Day started, there were a number of requests for relaxations of the ground rules, and that the senior CIA representatives felt they should go to State, and if they didn't get through there, they didn't go directly to the President.

MR. DULLES: They went directly to the President at 4:30 in the morning, you remember?

RESPONSE: Yes, that one time.

MR. DULLES: But after that, they certainly had very good access to the President. The President never cut off access at any time.

QUESTION: Would you say then that the CIA leadership encountered no buffer in presenting operational requirements to the President?

MR. DULLES: No, never.

QUESTION: Do you have anything else you would like to put into the record?

MR. DULLES: I have been considering the organization within the CIA for this type of operation. It is obvious that any paramilitary operation of any consequence requires constant attention and it requires the fixing of responsibility. It is also obvious that I cannot spend all my time on any one operation. I am responsible for carrying on the work of the Agency. On the side of the production of intelligence there are many requirements, and we have operations and decisions to make all around the world, and someone has to make

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those decisions, so it is not possible for me, even if I were qualified, to be the commander in chief of every paramilitary operation, and I therefore believe in delegation of authority, and I did delegate it. Maybe I delegated too much in this particular operation, but I'm not sure that my judgment would have been sounder than those who made the decisions, but it was quite true that I did not follow every detail of this operation. As I indicated, everyday I would set down orally and in writing, a lot of questions that I had in my own mind about whether or not they had considered different things. We've had bad luck several times. We have a good deal of technique and a good deal of capability in air operations. We have a certain amount and growing capability in the small guerrilla type land operations, but particularly on the amphibious side, we haven't had much experience and the experience that we've had has not been successful. Consequently, the thing I was most apprehensive about was the question of getting the Brigade from X to Y and getting them there with their supplies. We did have this Task Force; I think the men in that Task Force were competent; I think we should have had even more constant connection with the Defense Department than we did even though General Gray was extremely useful and there most of the time. I may have had it in my mind more than I should have that we were getting the best possible advice from Defense. I think I should have looked into this situation and seen exactly how much responsibility was being taken by Defense and how much was being taken by the head of our Task Force -- Mr. Bissell, Mr. Barnes, and the Task Force itself.

ADMIRAL BURKE: How much did our people know? There were lots of things they didn't know about.

MR. DULLES: Why didn't they know, Arleight? We didn't hold out anything. It may have been by ignorance we didn't tell them everything.

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ADMIRAL BURKE: That's right. It wasn't a question of deliberately holding out. But take Captain Scappa. One man can't be awake all the time, although he was your lad, and Gray was over there quite a bit, he wasn't over there all the time and just by the virtue of not having enough people, there would be holes in the information.

MR. DULLES: Well, I may have assumed that if Captain Scappa didn't think he was able to cover the thing, he would say that he couldn't, but maybe we didn't give Captain Scappa adequately clear instructions on what we were expecting him to cover.

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**18 May 1961**

**4-6-00**

CUBAN INTERNAL SITUATION

Background for Dissidence

By the beginning of 1961, the Castro Government was strong enough to move toward extending its control in a variety of ways which it knew would increase popular disaffection and resentment. The regime, having already confiscated most major firms, large farms, and organized a peoples' militia to counter-balance the army, was now ready to further extend its power over the economic, social, and personal life of the individual Cuban.

Security Controls. In January 1961, the creation of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, a block-warden type of informant system, placed practically every Cuban citizen under the watchful eye of a State informer. This was added to an already effective system whereby agents of the G-2 (the secret police) worked with the National Revolutionary Police in every city and town, while, in the rural area, mobile rural police units, cooperating with the G-2 and the militia, covered the countryside. The Cuban security apparatus, under the direction of local Communists and with the guidance of Soviet Bloc intelligence officers, gave evidence of developing into a sophisticated intelligence organization. The creation of an additional, wholly

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self-contained C-2 control, under the direction of a Bloc intelligence officer, represented a further development of a police state apparatus.

Labor. Organized labor, which under Batista had achieved a position of wide political and economic influence, was by mid-1960 under Communist control, and the workers were becoming increasingly restive under the new restrictions and obligations. Employees now worked longer hours for less pay. For example, the sugar workers, who began the harvest in January, 1961, were ordered to work 16 hours a day at 50% reduction in salary. They also served in the militia without pay. They "voluntarily" contributed their leisure time and part of their salary for governmental projects. They were controlled by limitations on job transfers and travel restrictions from city to city.

Youth. The opening in February, 1961, of child nurseries (for ages one to six) and the formation in April, 1961, of a militant Association of Pioneers (for ages seven to thirteen), which added to the youth organizations already in existence, placed virtually every youth in the one-to-twenty-five age category in the hands of a government-controlled youth organization, where they could be indoctrinated with revolutionary zeal for the regime and weaned away from parental and religious influence.

Education. The much-publicized educational program for the year 1961, in which illiterates are to be taught to read and write from Communist-oriented primers, by teachers, many of whom are teen-agers who have spent three to six months in the Sierra Maestra undergoing Communist indoctrination, was presented by the regime as a magnificent step forward and 1961 was officially proclaimed the "Year of Education." The training of such

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teachers began in late 1960 in order to despatch them in April, 1961, to all corners of the island seeking out the illiterates. Many realistic Cubans viewed the movement as a means of subjecting the illiterate peasant, the only remaining uncontrolled and the most individualistic element of the population, to indoctrination and to the informer system. The older, professional teachers became increasingly apprehensive that their positions under the Communist-dominated education system would soon be taken over by these young pro-regime teachers.

Economic. The creation in March, 1960, of an economic czar, Che Guevara, merely served to emphasize the centralized control of the economy. The Urban Reform law of October, 1960, in practice left the State the real owner of all rental property and, in the rural sector, the collectives and peoples' farms were approaching the Soviet pattern.

Other Factors. The intensification of indoctrination through all possible media during work and leisure hours left the average Cuban with virtually no escape from governmental propaganda. The regime's disregard for objective justice and the rule of law, the drum-head execution of young counter-revolutionaries, and the increased virulent attacks on the Catholic church and clergy were further causes of discontent. The economic deterioration which resulted in shortages of such essentials as soaps, fats, salt, eggs, rice, and beans were adding to the general picture of unhappiness.

#### Position of Communist Party in Cuba

A further source of opposition to the regime was the increasing awareness that the Communist Party had in effect taken over Castro's

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revolution and the regime had identified itself with the Sino-Soviet Bloc. Diplomatic relations had been established with every Bloc country except East Germany; economic and trade agreements with the Bloc countries left Cuba economically dependent on the Bloc, and the shipment of Bloc military equipment (estimated at 30,000 to 40,000 tons in the fall of 1960) created further ties. The number of Bloc technical and military advisers and instructors in Cuba was reported to number at least a thousand. Cuba had signed protocols covering cultural-scientific cooperation with almost all the Bloc members, and the traffic between Cuba and the Bloc had reached considerable proportions. With several groups arriving and departing each week. Some hundred of Cuban students had left for Iron Curtain countries, and arrangements were being announced for Bloc professors to replace dismissed or resigned Cuban university professors. Cuban "front" groups (labor, student, youth, women) had established relations with their Bloc counterparts and previous ties of organizations representing these population sectors with Free World movements were dissolved.

Locale of Discontent

By February, 1961, several sources had estimated that the percentage of the population now disenchanted with the Castro regime had reached as high as 60%. The middle class, largely urban centered, offered the most nearly solid resistance to the government. It was this class that had brought Castro to power and accordingly was first aware of the dangers of the regime's political course. It was furthermore the most affected by the deteriorating economic conditions. Certain elements of the middle class--students, labor, professional, and the Catholic hierarchy--were the most active opposition.

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By early 1961, the only mass support for the regime came from the lower class, both urban and rural, principally led by those who had already received or hoped to receive some benefits from the government. However, decreased wages and income even in the lower class added to the feeling of dissidence. While the lower class were not to play an active opposition role comparable to that of the middle class, their anti-regime contribution was substantial. For example, the Escambray guerrillas could not have survived as long as they did without the help of an estimated 10,000 peasant sympathizers.

Active Resistance

Guerrilla Activity. While there were many evidences of dissidence within Cuba during the early months of 1961, the most dramatic was the continuing guerrilla warfare waged against the regime by several hundred men in the Escambray Mountains. Led by such men as Evilio Duque and Osvaldo Ramirez, former Castro army officers, the guerrillas withstood from early December, 1960, the assault of some 40,000 Castro militiamen. Although there were few pitched battles, the siege tactics of the militia, which cut the guerrilla's supply links with civilian sympathizers resulted in such attrition that organized resistance in that area was virtually ended by mid-March, 1961. The four principal guerrilla leaders were forced to give up the struggle. Two of them, Duque and Ramirez, went into hiding in Habana and two others, Edal Montiel and Joaquin Bombibre, managed to reach the U.S.

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Other guerrilla activity during this period was reported from all areas of Cuba, with the exception of the Isle of Pines. In most instances, the guerrilla bands consisted of small groups, led by former Army officers, who had deserted from garrisons and taken to the hills. The size of the groups varied from fifteen to twenty men up to a reported 800 (the [REDACTED] band in Oriente Province).

Regardless of numbers, they were considered to be significant manifestations of discontent, since only desperate men would rebel in the face of overwhelming numerical strength of the Castro militia and in view of the fact that those who rebel on an island have no friendly border to cross when the going becomes difficult. In February, 1961, the following anti-Castro forces were reported from the various provinces:

Las Villas:	3-400 in Escambray under various leaders 100 near Corralillo near Benito Campos 180 near Yaguajay under [REDACTED]
Cameaguey:	groups of unknown size near Los Negros
Matanzas:	groups at Cascajal, Pedro Mayabon, and San Jose de los Rmos group of 80 near Jaguey Grande under [REDACTED]
Pinar del Rio:	150 in Sierra del Rosario
Oriente:	800 under [REDACTED]
Habana:	discussed below

These figures, it should be noted, represent the most conservative strength estimates and fall far short of the numbers frequently reported.

Activity in Habana. The chief center of anti-regime dissidence was in the city of Habana, where the leaders of the several resistance organizations maintained their headquarters. These organizations operated

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separately and except for their common hatred for Castro and his henchmen had no agreed program amongst themselves. This did not prevent practical cooperation, however, and the political differences which divided the exile groups in the U.S. lost their sharpness inside Cuba. The most effective internal organizations, as judged by their ability and willingness to carry out operations were the Movimiento Recuperacion de Revolucionario (MRR), the Movimiento Democratico Revolucionario Cristiano (MDC), and the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (DRE). The DRE was actually a branch of the MRR, and the MRR and the MDC in Habana tended to become indistinguishable from each other.

Another resistance element of significance consisted of the members of several unions. The refinery workers, bus workers, and electrical workers in particular, whose leadership had been systematically purged by the regime to make way for men more dedicated to the Communist rule.

The 700 to 1,000 active resistance fighters in Habana engaged primarily in acts of sabotage and in the dissemination of propaganda materials. The sabotage, while at times spectacular as in the burning down of the largest department store in the city and the extensive damage to a major television station, was largely of the nuisance variety and had little effect on the regime's key installations. Its counterpart in the countryside was the burning of sugar cane fields. While this was extensive, losses were minimal, since burnt cane can still be processed, and the effect was mostly psychological. Besides sabotage and some random shooting frays, there was a good deal of nuisance bombing, so much so that it came to be considered a nightly occurrence by early April, the peak of such activities.

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Several attempts were made on the major power stations and the water distribution system of Habana was considerably damaged, but these had the effect of only temporary inconvenience to the regime. While none of these sabotage actions were significant in themselves, they were evidences of considerable dissidence with a potential for more meaningful action once supplies of military equipment were made available and more trained agents infiltrated. It might also be pointed out that although many of the top leaders of the internal resistance fell into the hands of Castro's G-2 at the time of the invasion, the organizations were well enough established to provide replacements for those leaders and to carry on.

Opposition organizations. A great number of resistance organizations claimed to have a following in Cuba. A compilation, dated October, 1960, revealed the existence of approximately 200 resistance groups, a great many of which were believed to be little more than paper organizations. Of those which were not, the most significant non-Batista organizations were combined in the Frente Revolucionaria Democrática (FRD), which was the chief political coalition until the formation of the Revolutionary Council led by Dr. Miro Cardona. Two organizations which made extensive claims to resistance assets within Cuba deserve special note. One, the Unidad Revolucionaria (UR) appears at this time to have based its claims on the adherence to it of the chief guerrilla leaders of the Escambray. Since those leaders were also claimed by many other organizations, the validity of the UR claim cannot be determined. The second organization, much in the recent news, was Manolo Ray's Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (MRP), frequently referred to as the group with the best and most widespread

clandestine underground in Cuba. Whatever the truth may be on that score, the MRP failed to conduct any significant resistance activity, claimed as its own work known to have been performed by others, and passed up opportunities for concerted action. Manolo Ray reportedly once said he would prefer to save whatever assets he had for the struggle for power after Castro.

#### Estimated Resistance Strength

It was estimated in March, 1961, that there were from 2,500 to 3,000 persons in Cuba engaged in active resistance against the Castro regime. It was further estimated that a well-organized, well-armed force successful in securing a lodgement on Cuban soil, which receive the active support of 25% of the Cuban populace and could be expected, at the maximum, by no more than 20% of the people. Of the remaining 65%, the majority would adopt an attitude of neutrality until such time as there was a strong indication of which side had the better chance of victory. The figure of 2,500 to 3,000 of active fighters, it was believed, would expand at least ten times that size once the lodgement was successful to which they could rally. The word "lodgement" was used in the military sense as meaning "the occupation and holding of a position in hostile territory."

#### Impact of Invasion Failure

The failure of the invasion was accompanied by mass arrests, the setting-up of checkpoints, curfew, and other controls which had the effect of stifling the resistance almost entirely. Committees for the Defense of the Revolution proliferated the island. At least 50,000 persons--some reports indicate over 200,000--were herded into prisons and concentration camps. The effect of these measures plus the psychological impact

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of the failure of the invasion forces (which included the cream of the anti-Castro youth) have so demoralized the resistance that it is impossible to estimate its present strength or the time it will take to build up an effective internal force. The blatantly Communist nature of the regime as revealed in its recent announcements and repressive actions have undoubtedly aroused resentment among Cubans who heretofore were either pro-Castro or neutral. The foreign embassies and legations in Habana are bulging with persons who have sought political asylum. A key problem for the resistance in the future will be that of finding reliable anti-Castro leaders willing to remain in Cuba.

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COLONEL HAWKINS

2/7/00, b4h

(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but  
represent the general substance of the statements made).

STATEMENT: Our conclusion has been that in view of the  
training there really was no feasible guerrilla alternative.  
However, this fact was never understood by Government officials.  
Consequently, they were under the false impression that going  
guerrilla was a realistic possibility. Would you please comment  
on this point?

COLONEL HAWKINS: First, I would like to address the  
question of the training for guerrilla activity. Many of the  
key officers who started out originally in the program received  
guerrilla training. They received guerrilla training initially  
in Panama. This training was directed toward the formation of  
paramilitary teams for guerrilla purposes and continued until  
early November 1960 when the directive was issued to start  
training a more conventional force.

COLONEL HAWKINS: Now I would like to discuss some of the  
training problems. There were a number of factors which made  
it necessary to concentrate entirely on the training for conven-  
tional warfare. One of these was the slowness of recruiting.  
In fact, the recruiting was stopped for a period of about two  
or three weeks in the autumn when they had the revolution in  
Guatemala, and when consideration was being given to the possi-  
bility of moving Cuban troops out of there entirely and no one  
knew where they could be moved to. The United States was  
considered and Saipan was considered, and so on.

STATEMENT: I think that is an important point. I had  
forgotten that the recruiting had to be suspended during that  
period.

QUESTION: What was that period?

COLONEL HAWKINS: It was in November.

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COLONEL KING: It was ten days after the cable went out changing the concept of the training of the strike force.

COLONEL HAWKINS: What I'm trying to show are the reasons why no further guerrilla training was or could be given. In November we were not getting any recruits, and they were coming very slowly after this until we broke a political log jam with the FRD. They were deliberately withholding recruits and were being so selective in accepting recruits that each member of the FRD would only take those that he thought would be responsive to his personal control. The next point about the training that I would like to go into was the fact that the 300 people we had in hand at that time had already been over this guerrilla training. Another pertinent factor is that in order to go into the conventional military training, we had to have trainers.

QUESTION: How long were you negotiating for those trainers, do you recall?

COLONEL HAWKINS: It's in my report; however, I don't have a copy of it here. Anyway, it was January before the trainers arrived in Guatemala. By this time the recruits were coming in more rapidly. Consequently, due to the pressure of time, we had to concentrate on the barest minimum of essential subjects. There was no time for training the new people in guerrilla warfare when we barely had time to train them for the pending operation. These are the reasons why no further guerrilla training was given.

STATEMENT: It's apparent that under the terms of the requirements, you had to concentrate on conventional warfare.

COLONEL HAWKINS: Going to the question of the opportunity for guerrilla warfare, the Zapata operation never offered anywhere near the possibilities for guerrilla warfare that the Trinidad plan did. We of the military staff realized that the Zapata swamp was isolated from the rest of Cuba, and if the force was unable to break out, they would not be able to take any really effective guerrilla action.

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STATEMENT: The President and the Secretary of State would say they were amazed that these men were captured because they felt they could get away by going guerrilla.

COLONEL HAWKINS: I think we did make some representations that they could get away, but not by going guerrilla, and I think they could have been evacuated from the beachhead if we had control of the air.

STATEMENT: Yes, but if they had control of the air, you wouldn't have had a requirement for evacuation. So it's a circular argument.

COLONEL HAWKINS: Well, that's right. An amphibious operation of any kind is impossible without control of the air, so we needn't even go beyond that point.

COLONEL HAWKINS: I would like to say that on more than one occasion, Mr. Bissell, in presenting these alternative military plans to the members of the Cabinet and the President, emphasized the point that the Trinidad plan offered the opportunity for effective guerrilla action in contrast to the other one. This was made absolutely clear on a number of occasions.

RESPONSE: I am sure of that, but he never said that they couldn't go guerrilla in Zapata, or ever suggested that there was a minimal possibility as we are now inclined to believe.

COLONEL HAWKINS: In the Zapata plan I thought of guerrilla action as being a means of saving individuals if the force was defeated, rather than believing that they could become an effective guerrilla force, because I could never see how effective guerrilla operations could be conducted from there.

QUESTION: It was explained to the President and others that this operation could not really be a failure even if the beachhead was washed out, because the invasion force could easily become guerrillas who would be an asset in the struggle against Castro. Do you think that is a correct appraisal of the situation as you saw it?

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COLONEL HAWKINS: No, Sir, I don't. I can recall that in the evaluation of the two plans it was represented a little bit differently from that. As I recall, for example, Mr. Bissell had one or more meetings with members of the Cabinet and with the President wherein he mentioned that one of the desirable features of the Trinidad plan was that it offered this guerrilla alternative.

STATEMENT: Yes, I know he did with Trinidad, but he also made the same appraisal with regard to Zapata.

COLONEL HAWKINS: I didn't think so. I don't recall hearing him say that Zapata offered good possibilities for guerrilla action.

STATEMENT: Mr. Bissell came to my office and that was the statement that he made to me, and he made it quite clear to the President. I think he recognizes this now.

COLONEL HAWKINS: I recall the President's having voiced considerable concern about the Zapata operation as to what would happen if they were indeed unable to break out of that swamp area, and he asked a great many pointed questions. Could they be evacuated or what would happen to them? We did think, and we did say that a great many, but not necessarily all the troops could be evacuated from the Zapata area in the shipping that we controlled. But that of course presupposed control of the air which was a prerequisite for any amphibious operation from the outset.

QUESTION: I believe you confirmed what Egan told us, that the troops were indeed briefed that if the beachhead was penetrated they would fall back on the beach for sea evacuation and if that didn't work, then they should go guerrilla?

COLONEL HAWKINS: I was not present when Egan briefed them on that. I did instruct Egan to brief the troops that if there should be a penetration in the eastern flank, where I thought

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the most likely spot was for penetration, that they should join at the Red Beach area in the west which was the most favorable area for escape and evasion and for guerrilla action. I also told him that on the other hand, should they be driven from the Red Beach area, they should all get together down toward Blue Beach. Now what he actually told them at the final briefing, I am not prepared to say as I did not attend all the briefings.

QUESTION: How was the 4th Battalion composed when it went in?

COLONEL HAWKINS: The 4th Battalion was an infantry battalion trained for motorized movement.

QUESTION: You mentioned before lunch that you knew the T-33s were armed with 50 caliber machine guns; however, in the air annex of the field order they were listed as trainers. Would you say that the importance of getting these T-33s was appreciated?

COLONEL HAWKINS: I think so, but I think the T-33 turned out to be a more effective aircraft than we had anticipated. I don't believe we thought they would be as dangerous to us as the B-26s.

QUESTION: Do you recall any discussion or any attempts to get any sort of fighters into the force?

COLONEL HAWKINS: These T-33s couldn't fly from a carrier and the whole problem of an air base had us pretty well stymied from the outset. I don't know if you are aware of it but we really didn't know if we were going to be able to use even Puerto Cabezas until the last moment. President Somosa had always insisted that he be given some assurance by proper officials of our government that he would be supported in case this matter came before the United Nations or the Organization of American States. As far as I know, no one at the proper level of government ever gave him such assurance. At least it is our

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impression that none was ever given. There was also continuing opposition to using a Nicaraguan base from the State Department. So far as using a base anywhere else, we tried but we simply couldn't. Consequently, the fighters were ruled out by the fact that we couldn't get a base.

STATEMENT: I just don't see how you could expect to control the air. You were bound to have some unneutralized air.

COLONEL HAWKINS: Well, let me go back further to what I thought about destroying the aircraft on the ground. I think our estimates of the operable aircraft they had was pretty accurate. We thought there was someplace between a dozen or 18 that would fly. I consulted with Colonel Gaines and the air people about knocking these out and they thought, without question, that they could. I thought they could too. I've seen a good many aircraft knocked out myself.

RESPONSE: Yes, I have too, but I've never seen a 100% knocked out.

COLONEL HAWKINS: Yes, but I have personally seen a squadron knocked out by three fighters. I sat there and watched this done myself. I just don't know what is so difficult about strafing out a few aircraft. I thought we could knock them out and I'm surprised we didn't. I think American pilots would have knocked them out. I think a good American pilot could have totally destroyed the Castro air capability which was not a great capability.

QUESTION: Without napalm?

COLONEL HAWKINS: Yes, just with machine guns.

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MAR 23 2000

3 May 1961

NO COMMENT

DATE 3-20-2000

SUBJECT: Sequence of Events (D-2 to D+2), and Organization  
and Operation of Command Post.

REFERENCE: Paragraph 4, Memorandum dated 1 May 1961, Subject:  
Additional Information Desired of CIA.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS  
(D-2 to D+2)

Summary. The description of events set forth herein is based  
upon messages and other information received at Headquarters  
during the operation. Comments are inserted where amplifying  
information is considered necessary. Later debriefing of  
personnel who actually participated in the operation has pro-  
vided more extensive information concerning the action, but  
the purpose of this paper is to record what was known at  
Headquarters at the time.

D-2 (15 April 1961).

Air Strikes.

The purpose of these air strikes was to destroy the  
Castro air capabilities, located at Campo Militar, San Antonio  
de los Baños, and Santiago de Cuba. In conjunction with the  
air strikes, one B-49 with atomic war fare capability was released  
by a C-119 to land at Miami with the story that he was a  
defector from the Castro Air Force. The purpose of the de-  
fection flight was to spread that the air strike was launched  
from outside Cuba, and as a subterfuge to obtain mass defections  
in Castro's Air Force.

The air strikes were carried out as scheduled at dawn  
D-2 by B-26s, allocated as follows:

- 1 - Campo Militar
- 3 - San Antonio de los Baños
- 2 - Santiago de Cuba

ATTACHMENT III (Data Report)

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Initial pilot reports indicated that 50% of Castro's offensive air was destroyed at Campo Libertad, 75% to 80% aircraft destruction at San Antonio de los Baños, and that the destruction at Santiago included 2 E-25's, 1 DC-3, 1 Lodestar, and 1 T-33 or Sea Fury. Subsequent photographic studies and interpretations indicated considerably less damage.

Comment: The State Department had consistently objected to any air attacks on Cuban airfields or other targets in Cuba. Conversely, the military planners on this project had realized from the outset that complete domination of the air was vital to the success of any landing attack. Therefore, methods were sought whereby destruction of enemy aircraft could be achieved in a manner acceptable to the State Department. It was within this framework that the defection operation in conjunction with B-26 attacks on Campo Libertad, San Antonio de los Baños, and Santiago was presented to the President of the United States, who approved the proposal. It was also the understanding of the military planners, at the time that the President gave his approval, that the B-26 strikes were to be followed by strikes on down D-day on airfields and other military targets. The fact that air attacks on D-day were planned was specifically mentioned by the Deputy Director (Plans) when he briefed the President on the contemplated operation.

#### Diversionary Landing at Oriente.

A landing of 100 men west of Guantánamo by a group of 100 men, led by Mike Egan, was planned for the night of 14/15 April. The landing had a twofold purpose: (1) to divert attention from the main landing, and (2) to organize guerrilla operations in Oriente Province.

The ship on which the force was embarked (Arcturion) approached the landing zone on schedule without incident. However, the landing was aborted. Reasons given for aborting were as follows:

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(1) Friendly beach reception party did not appear on beach. (Comment: The leader was never informed that there would be a reception party.)

(2) Reconnaissance boat was lost.

(3) Two rubber boats were lost.

When it was learned that the operation had not been conducted, instructions were issued to land the following night. The ship remained in the area, retraced its route of the day before, and made its approach without incident. However, the landing again was not conducted. Reasons given this time were as follows:

(1) Reconnaissance boat broke down.

(2) Too much time lost in retrieving the reconnaissance boat.

(3) Friendly beach reception party did not appear on the beach.

(4) Enemy activity in area was too great.

Comment: The validity of the reasons given by him for not conducting the landing are questionable. Intelligence sources did not indicate that the force had discovered by the opposition. It was finally decided at Headquarters that weak leadership on the part of him was responsible for the refusal to land, and on 16 April (D-1) orders were given to this force to proceed to the Zapata area and join the main force. The him group did not arrive at Zapata in time to participate in the main operation.

#### Brigade En Route to Objective Area.

The ships on which the Brigade was embarked were following widely separated courses to the objective area. According to reports received (later confirmed by debriefings of Graydon Lynch, William Robertson, George Shane, and S. M. Rydberg), all ships were proceeding ahead of schedule.

- 4 -

Comment: This was not considered detrimental to the security of the operation at this time because of the distance which separated the ships from the objective area.

About 1000, 15 April the Atlantico reported an automatic weapon accident in which 1 man was killed and 2 men wounded. A U.S. Navy destroyer made pick up after dark that night. Wounded were eventually evacuated to Guantanamo Bay Naval Station.

D-1 (15 April 1961).

Seaborne Movement of Brigade.

The assault shipping continued to move on separate courses toward the objective area. From position reports rendered by the various ships and the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier Essex, it was determined that all the ships, except the Rio Escondido, were ahead of schedule. At about 0600, 16 April the ships were ordered to reduce speed in order to arrive at the remainder of reference points in accordance with Ship Movement Schedule (contained in Tab A to Appendix I to Annex II to the Operation Plan). Subsequent position reports indicated the ships complied with instructions.

The ships made their rendezvous with each other on time at about 1730, 16 April. They proceeded in column and made rendezvous with U.S. Navy LSD (San Marcos) about 5000 yards from Blue Beach. LCI and LCVP aboard the LSD were transferred to Cuban crews without incident between 2300 and 2400, 16 April.

Movement of Airborne Paratroopers from Base Camp in Gu. towards to Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.

This movement was accomplished during the night of 15/16 April without incident. The troops were moved expeditiously from aircraft to an isolated area near the airfield, where briefings of troops and aircraft crews were conducted until time for takeoff for objective area.

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Cancellation of D-day Air Strikes.

The information on the decision to cancel planned D-day air strikes against Cuban airfields and other military targets was received at the Command Post at about 2200, 17 April.

Comment: The late hour at which this information was received made it impossible to cancel the landing, though the FM staff planners recognized the implications of such a decision. The Brigade and assault shipping were advised at this time that all Castro aircraft had not been destroyed. The Blegar (Flagship) was ordered to expedite unloading of troops and essential cargo from the Houston, Caribe, and Atlantico and send them 50 miles to sea at the earliest possible time. The Blegar and Barbara J were ordered to protect the Rio Escondido while it was being unloaded during the day. Friendly B-26's were to fly cover over the beach-head all day. It was realized at the time by the paramilitary staff that loss of ships and military supplies on board was inevitable since it was known that Castro possessed an offensive air capability which had not been destroyed.

D-Day (17 April 1961).

Blue Beach

When it was determined that resistance was to be met in the landing over this beach, the Blegar moved in close to shore and delivered machine support. Brigade troops commenced landing at 0100.

0115 - Brigade Commander ashore.

0300 - Unloading of troops on Caribe completed. Commenced unloading troops from Atlantico. UDT reported searching for 1st landing point.

0330 - Troops from Atlantico landing under fire.

0420 - Brigade Commander issued orders to land troops, originally scheduled for Green Beach, over Blue Beach.

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- 0600 - First LCU ashore.
- 0630 - Enemy air attacks commence on shipping and Blue Beach
- 0640 - Friendly air support arrived. (There is no mention henceforth as to what this support accomplished).
- 0730 - Completed discharging all vehicles and tanks from LCU's.
- 0815 - Enemy F-33 shot down by Blagar.
  - All troops ashore at Blue Beach.
- 0913 - Rio Escondido hit and sunk. Crew members rescued and evacuated to Blagar.
  - Brigade reported Playa Giron Airstrip ready for use.
- 1010 - Continuous enemy air attacks forces shipping to go to sea. At 1200 headquarters issued instructions which required sailing south at best possible speed.
  - As ships withdrew they continued to come under air attack.
- 1130 - Brigade reported had only 4 hours ammunition left. (The Brigade Commander was probably referring only to Blue Beach, because there is nothing to indicate that he was in contact with units at Red Beach or with the airborne units).

The Blagar went to sea in company with the LCU with the plan to load the LCU's and then return after dark to make delivery of supplies and ammunition. However, after loading the LCU's, there wasn't sufficient time (darkness) remaining to make the run to the beach, unload the craft, and retire to the seaward.

In response to the Brigade Commander's request for ammunition, at 1300 Headquarters issued instructions to base

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in Nicaragua to make airdrops at head of Bahía de Cochinos and at Play. Ciron. During the night of 17/18 April 1 C-54 drop was made at Red Beach and 3 C-54 drops at Blue Beach. Results of drops are not positively known due to the fact that DZ's were not lighted.

#### Red Beach

Nothing was reported to Headquarters on D-day concerning the landing at Red Beach. On D+1; the following was reported by the Barbara J concerning the D-day landing.

270 men with 6 - 61mm mortars, 1 - 75 mm ER, 2 - 57mm ER, 1 - .50 caliber MG, and 2 - 80mm mortars were landed. A report from the Barbara J (message dated 221004Z) indicates that these troops were engaged immediately.

The Houston came under air attack at about 170630, and was hit. The ship went aground sometime later (time undetermined) with about 100 men on the west side of Bahía de Cochinos--about 5 miles from the landing beach.

#### Airborne Landings.

No action reported to Headquarters from the field on D-day. Certain reliable sources outside the objective area indicate the landing took place about 170730Z in pre-designated drop zones. Debriefing of pilots later confirmed that all landings were made except for one outpost scheduled for LZ-2.

#### Night Air Attacks.

Orders were issued at 1615 to bomb as many airfields as possible at night with fragmentation bombs. Three B-26 were launched for San Antonio de los Baños for these attacks but failed to find target due to haze and the fact that target was blacked out.

#### D+1 (18 April 1961).

At about 0730 the 2d Battalion at Red Beach reported for first time in message traffic, saying that its position could

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not be maintained without air support for more than 30 minutes.

- 0824 - Brigade Commander reported Blue Beach under attack by 12 tanks and 4 jet aircraft. Ammunition and supplies requested.

(Soon after the above report, authority to use napalm was granted for use in the beachhead area).

- 10:0 - Red Beach reported wiped out. It was learned later during debriefing of Lynch and Robertson that Deputy Brigade Commander had ordered a withdrawal to Blue Beach, which was executed in an orderly manner.

- 1200 - Blue Beach reported under attack by MIG-15's and T-33, and out of Tank ammunition, and almost all out of small arms ammunition also.

- 1600 - Essex reported long line of tanks and trucks approaching Blue Beach from east.

Enemy air attacks and shortage of ammunition continued to be reported the rest of the day. Three C-54 ammunition and food drops on Playa Giron were reported dropped during the night 18/19 April. One of the drops was completely successful; and the other two doubtful - one landed off the end of the runway at the airfield, and one landed in the water. No report was received as to the amount of the latter that was recovered.

Friendly air attacks, using napalm were conducted late in the day, causing undetermined damage. Pilot reports indicate many fires to the west of Blue Beach.

- 1800 - 1st Battalion reported under heavy artillery attack. Position indicated at this time was considerably south of the 1st Battalion planned position north and northeast of San Blas.

- Brigade Commander continued to request jet air cover, including close support and ammunition.

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**Comment:** By means of a message sent from Headquarters at 2024, the Brigade Commander was informed that a C-46 with ammunition would land at the Playa Giron airfield, and would evacuate wounded. It was also recommended to the Brigade Commander that patrols armed with bazookas search out tanks and knock them out during night. Brigade commander was also informed in this message that ships would be sent in on night 19 April for evacuation if he so recommended.

2200 - Brigade Commander sent message "I will not be evacuated. We will fight to the end here if we have to."

During the night many discussions were held concerning the participation of U.S. Navy aircraft over the beachhead area. The final instruction provided for Navy CAP between 0630 and 0730 to defend "CEF against air attack from Castro forces." The aircraft were issued instructions not to seek air combat but defend CEF forces from air attack, and not to attack ground targets. As a result of these provisions, plans were made to use all available B-26 to support Brigade, while Navy was providing air protection. Later, it was reported that Cuban pilots, flying these missions aborted prior to arrival over the beachhead, and two American crews were shot down.

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D-2 (19 April 1961)

0600 - Enemy air strikes commenced.

0710 - 1430 -- Enemy commenced closing in on Brigade elements in Blue Beach sector with tanks and infantry in coordination with air attacks. From the beginning of this period, the Brigade Commander sent many frantic appeals for air cover and support to destroy enemy tanks.

Last message - "Am destroying all equipment and communications. Tanks are in sight. I have nothing left to fight with. Am taking to woods. I cannot wait for you."

Comment: Commencing early morning of 19 April, serious consideration was given to evacuating Brigade during the night 19/20 April despite the Brigade Commander's assertion that he would not evacuate. Necessary instructions were issued to move shipping closer to the Blue Beach area so that the run to the beach, re-embarkation of troops, and withdrawal to sea could be done during hours of darkness. Identification of messages sent are as follows:

Hqs. Msg. No. 4035 (CUE 7239) - 190620Z  
 4039 (CUE 7269) - 191346Z  
 4040 (CUE 7271) - 191353Z  
 4044 (CUE 7280) - 191434Z  
 4053 (CUE 7295) - 191627Z

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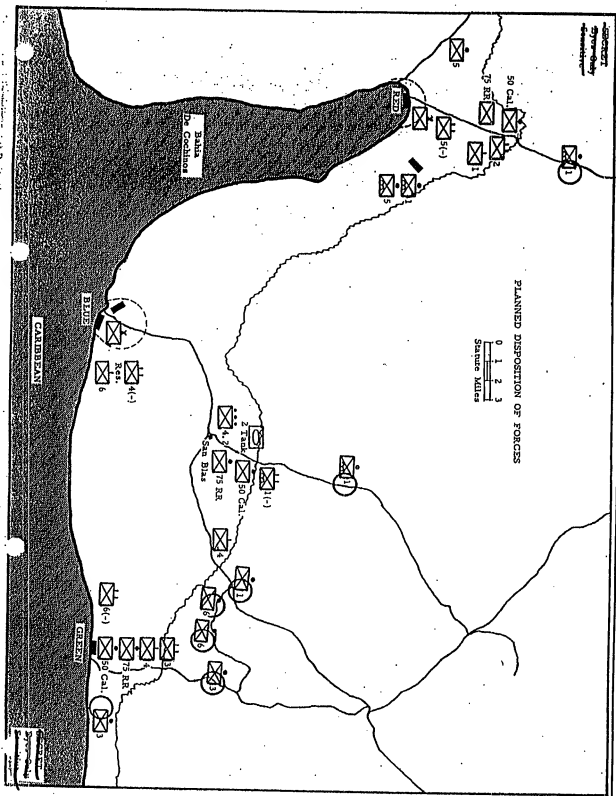
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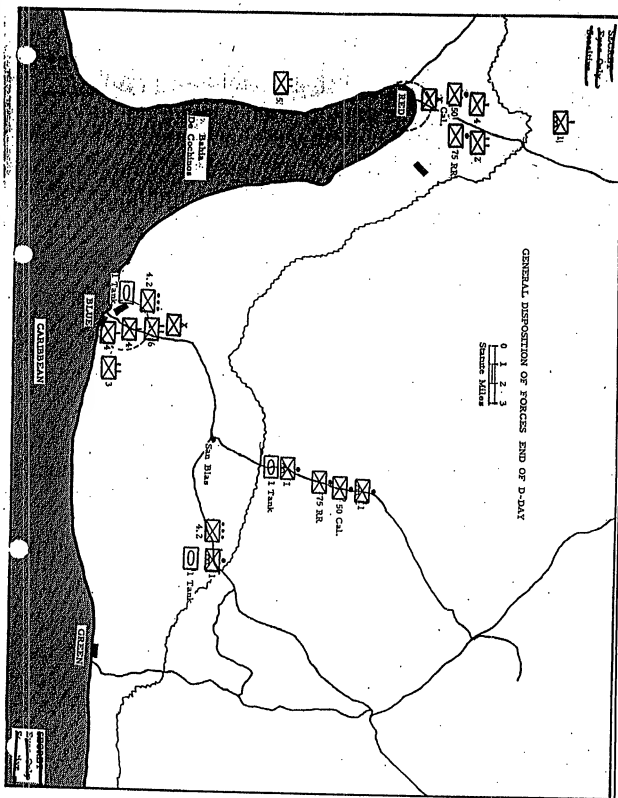
ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES OF COMMAND POST

1. The Command Post functioned in a manner similar to that of a military command post (divisional level). Representatives from the sections comprising the Paramilitary Staff operated on a 24 hour basis. Sections represented were Ground Operations, Air Operations, Maritime Operations, Intelligence, Personnel and Logistics.
2. Contact liaison was maintained with the Joint Chiefs of Staff through Lt. Col. Benjamin Tarwater (JCS Staff representative) who visited the Operations Center twice daily to obtain timely briefing notes in order to prepare and present daily JCS briefings.
3. Telephone and cable contact was maintained with Headquarters CINCLANT. Communications with the Brigade and CEF ships was via CIA communication center at the operation center building (Quarters Eye).
4. Colonel Hawkins, Chief, Paramilitary Staff and Mr. Esterline, the Project Chief, were physically present at the Command Post in Quarters Eye throughout the period of operations.
5. Mr. Bissell and Colonel King were also immediately available for consultation throughout the operation and frequent conferences between these officials, Mr. Esterline and Colonel Hawkins were held.
6. Decisions within the competence of CIA were immediately reached in all cases. Decisions requiring Department of Defense participation were critically delayed due to the necessity for consideration at higher levels of government and political implications.
7. During the final day of the operation, Colonel Hawkins and other key military staff officers posted themselves in the communications center of Quarters Eye and responded to messages coming from the field instantly upon receipt.

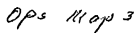
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O/S MAP 1



DPS M. H. 2



NO OBJECTION TO

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23X

DECLASSIFICATION: DATE

REQUIRES CONCURRENCE

OF NSC

STATE DEPT. DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW

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Declassify after with concurrence of

EO 12958, 25X

IPR/CTR by [Signature] Date: MAR 23 2000

CIA HAS NO OBJECTION TO  
DECLASSIFICATION AND/OR  
RELEASE OF CIA INFORMATION  
IN THIS DOCUMENT

26 April 1961

No DIA objection  
TVX 4-6-00

NO CHANGE  
DATE 3-20-2000  
WKS 3-20-2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: Lt. Colonel B. W. Tarwater, USAF  
J-5, OJCS.

SUBJECT : Transmittal of Documents

1. Enclosed are the following documents:

Attachment A - A brief narrative of the air activity (TS-155685-A)

Attachment B - A chronological sequence of events (TS-155685-B)

Attachment C - A report returned from Tide on aircraft,  
crew, target and departure time (TS-155685-C)

Attachment D - Training received by the pilots

Attachment E - Support drop missions flown from D-Day  
through D+2

Attachment F - A list of personnel involved in the training  
of the pilots and their background (TS-155685-D)

Attachment G - Composition of base unit at Tide. This  
does not include the air unit, which consisted of twenty people, the  
majority of which were the Operations Staff. (TS-155685-E)

SWB  
STANLEY W. BEERLI  
Colonel, USAF

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DOCUMENT # 23X

Narrative of Air Activity

1. On 8 April 1961 a briefing was conducted for the Deputy Director (Plans), Acting Chief, WH-4, and Acting Chief, DPD, which outlined the proposed plan of air operations for Project JMATE and Sub-Project JMFURY. Targets were as cited in DPD Air Operations Plan 200-1 with the exception that Targets 1, 2, and 3 were to be struck on D-3 as a portion of Project JMFURY. Project JMFURY involved target 1, San Antonio de Los Baños, two aircraft; target 2, Campo Libertad, two aircraft; target 3, Santiago de Cuba, two aircraft.

2. On 9 April the briefing team departed Washington for JMTIDE. The purpose of this trip was to brief the combat elements of the proposed plan of activities. After two days target study at JMTIDE, a recommendation was submitted to Headquarters which recommended assignment of three aircraft each to Targets 1 and 2. This change was effected.

3. On 15 April Project JMFURY was implemented with strikes occurring at dawn. A 24 hour delay received 13 April changed air strikes from D-3 to D-2. Results of that strike were believed to have been destruction of 70 to 80 percent of GOC's combat air capability. Damages sustained by attacking aircraft were as follows: one aircraft and crew destroyed by anti aircraft fire eventually crashing into the sea approximately 30 miles north of the Cuban coast attempting to reach Boca Chica Naval Air Station. One aircraft landed at Grand Cayman short of fuel. One aircraft landed at Boca Chica Naval Air Station, no battle damage had been incurred. The reason for landing at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station was due to this aircraft attempting to escort a crippled B-26 to Boca Chica which later crashed into the sea. The aircraft which landed at Boca Chica and Grand Cayman were eventually returned to the launch base.

4. On D-1 eleven targets were assigned the B-26 strike force designed to destroy the remainder of GOC operational air capability. Between the hours of 2100 local and 0100 local during the night 16-17 April the target assignment was changed prohibiting air strike of any airfields the morning of D day. All aircraft were committed to sustain air support over the beachhead area.

5. On D day 5 C-46's and one C-54 successfully dropped the airborne battalion at the appointed DZ's within the objective area. These aircraft returned to the launch base. B-26 aircraft were rotated over the beachhead throughout the day. The B-26 aircraft reporting the sinking of one gun boat, the destruction of one Sea Fury and one B-26, numerous strikes on ground

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targets and one C-46 aircraft by evasive attack caused an attacking Sea Fury aircraft to crash into the sea. Four B-26 were lost late on D day to enemy T-33 aircraft. One aircraft landed at Grand Cayman with one engine shot out. One aircraft landed at Boca Chica due to pilot fatigue. It should be pointed out that all Cuban air crews had at this point been up 36 to 48 hours without sleep. Thirteen (13) actual combat sorties were flown on D day. All sorties were in support of the amphibious landing on the beachhead. At this point it became clear that enemy air activity utilizing T-33 aircraft could destroy the more obsolete B-26 type aircraft with relative ease and a decision was made to attempt to destroy the remaining GOC aircraft at night on the ground through successful bombing raids. Six aircraft were scheduled to strike the main base of operations in two waves of three each during the night of 17-18 April. The aircraft aborted on take off. Heavy haze and low clouds prevented three aircraft from finding target and one aircraft attacked San Antonio de Los Baños.

6. On D plus 1 it became necessary to utilize American civilian pilots to protect the beachhead area due to the fact the Cubans were either too tired or refused to fly. Six sorties were flown during the afternoon of D plus 1. Reported damage by GOC sources indicated 1800 casualties and destruction of seven tanks.

7. On the morning of D plus 2 American pilots again were pressed into service for protection of the beachhead area for two reasons (1) the reluctance of the Cuban pilots to fly more combat sorties without air to air cover and (2) the Americans were attempting to build morale and develop a will to win. Two American crews were shot down with no survivors in the morning of D plus 2. Both aircraft were lost to T-33 aircraft. All sorties flown on the morning of D plus 2 were scheduled during the one hour period Navy air cover was supposed to have been provided the beachhead area.

8. In the afternoon of D plus 2 a radio message was received from the ground Brigade Commander stating that he was destroying his equipment and "heading for the hills". Upon receipt of this message all air activities in support of the beachhead area were terminated.

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## CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Time	Scheduled	Flown	Destroyed	Emerg. Base	Total A/C In-Commitment
1. Prior to D-10	15 targets scheduled 15 aircraft committed for D-Day				
2. D-10	12 targets scheduled (Delayed 9-10-11)* 14 aircraft committed for D-Day				
3. D-9	Fury Project scheduled for D-2 (8 aircraft - 3 targets)				
4. D-2 (15 April)	3 aircraft - Libertad 3 " - San Antonio Los Banos 2 " - Santiago de Cuba 1 " - Special Project	9+ (1 abort)	1 (AA)**	2	15
5. D-1 (GLOW 9896)	11 targets scheduled (Deleted 5-9-10-11)* 10 aircraft committed for D-Day				
6. D-1 (GLOW 9913)	4 targets scheduled (1-2-8A)* 5 aircraft committed for D-Day				
7. D-Day (17 April) (GLOW 9923)	No day targets (strategic) All aircraft committed support beachhead for D-Day				
8. D-Day (GLOW 4660)	Max effort night attacks on air-fields 6 aircraft committed 17/18 April	13+ (1 abort)	4 (T-33s)***	3	11

\* Target numbers above are listed in Appendix 2 to Annex B to Air Operations Plan No. 200-1

\*\* Loss due to antiaircraft fire (AA)

\*\*\* Loss due to T-33 fighter aircraft



MISSION	AIRCRAFT	CREW	PARCEL	REF	REP
NT-26-1	933	P-COSSE, BATISTA	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	MODERATE DAMAGE TO AIRFIELD. (CARABINERO LANDED GRAND CAYMAN)
NT-26-1	931	P-RENE, ARDOIS	DE LOS BANCOS	1740Z	
NT-26-2	935	P-CRESPO, FERRAZ	CAPO LIBERTAD	1540Z	DOWN, FERRAZ SHOT DOWN. CRESPO IN TO BOCA CHICO
NT-26-3	933	P-FONZOL, PUOL	SANTIAO	1540Z	HEAVY DAMAGE TO AIRFIELD FACILITIES.
NT-26-4	935	P-HERNANDEZ, LOPEZ	HEMAN	1540Z	DOWN
NT-26-5	931	P-VIANELLO, FERRAZ	STARE	1540Z	DOWN
NT-26-6	945	P-VARELA, AFOOT	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	DOWNED RED BEACH NORTH
NT-26-7	933	P-HERNANDEZ, LOPEZ	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	DOWNED RED BEACH UP NY ROAD
NT-26-8	935	P-RENE, ARDOIS	ING ISLE OF PINES	1740Z	1 PE (AFTER) SUNK AND BENT OVER RED BEACH AND KILLED 6 TROOPS
NT-26-9	930	P-CORTINA, HERRANDEZ	"	1740Z	1 PE (AFTER) SUNK AND BEACH PATROL
NT-26-10	945	P-ZUNIGA, TEGO	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	1 SEA FRY DAMAGED. ZUNIGA LANDED AT GRAND CAYMAN.
NT-26-11	915	P-FARIAS, GONZALEZ	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	SHOT DOWN 1 P-26 AND 1 TROOP. FARIAS WAS SHOT DOWN, SURVIVED. JOINED BRIGADE AT BLUE BEACH. AIR LIFTED OUT 19 APR 61. CO-PILOT KILLED.
NT-26-12	915	P-FONZOL, PUOL	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	CONTACTED TANGO - HAVE COVER TO SHIPS FOR 2 / 23 - GED DROPPED AT SEA WHEN ATTACKED BY T-33.
NT-26-13	928	P-ROVIA, BOVO	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	GOT TO BEACH BUT LEFT BEACHED TANKS AND IN TANKS HUNG ON ROCKETS. DROPPED GED IN SEA.
NT-26-14	935	P-VIANELLO, FERRAZ	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	SHOT DOWN, NO SURVIVORS
NT-26-15	937	P-SOTO, RODRIGUEZ	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	LANDED GRAND CAYMAN. BONES AND ROCKETS DROPPED ON GUINTEGOS AIRPORT
NT-26-16	934	P-CORTINA, HERRANDEZ	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	EMERGENCY LANDING BOCA CHICO
NT-26-17	933	P-RENE, ARDOIS	BLUE BEACH	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-18	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-19	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-20	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-21	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-22	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-23	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-24	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-25	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN
NT-26-26	935	P-ROVIA, BOVO	SAN ANTONIO	1740Z	DOWN



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- A. PILOT
- B. TRAINING HOURS
- C. GUNNERY SORTIES/RDS
- D. ROCKET SORTIES/RX
- E. BOMB SORTIES/BOMBS
- F. PREV EXPERIENCE/HOURS FLYING TIME

1. THE FOLLOWING INFO ON EACH A/C COMMANDER IS KEYED AS

ABOVE AS REQUESTED PARA 1 REF.

(OPR NOTE: FOLL IN THREE COLUMNS SEPERATED BY DASH)

A. B-26

A VARELA (S2 CMDB) - A <sup>Montezuma</sup> COSME (CH CUBAN OPS) - A HERRERA

B 130 - B 110 - B 150

C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS - C 10/2000 RDS

D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS

E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS - E 10/40 BOMBS

F 1800 MIL HRS - F 5000 MIL & CIV HRS - F 11000 CIV HRS

A PONZOA - A GARCIA - A ZUNIGA

B 145 - B 100 - B 50

C 9/1900 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS

D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS

E 9/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS

F 11000 CIV HRS - F 5000 CIV & MIL HRS - F 4000 MIL (600-B-26)

A CABALLERA - A CARRO - A ROJAS

B 50 - B 50 - B 60

C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS

D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS

E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS

F 3000 MIL HRS - F 3000 MIL HRS (300-B-26) - F 1200 MIL HRS

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A SOTO - A FARIAS - CORTINAS ~~SECRET~~  
 B 60 - B 110 - B 110  
 C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS  
 D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS  
 E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS  
 F 1500 MIL HRS(500-B-25) - F 1600 MIL HRS(400-B-26) - B 200 MIL HRS

A CRISPIN - A CRESPO - A VIANELLO  
 B 50 - B 120 - B 110  
 C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS  
 D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS  
 E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS  
 F 1500 MIL HRS(500 B-26) - F 2000 MIL HRS(800-B-26) - F 400 MIL HRS

A PIEDRA - A MON  
 B 90 - B 120  
 C 8/1800 RDS - C 8/1800 RDS  
 D 4/32 ROCKETS - D 4/32 ROCKETS  
 E 8/36 BOMBS - E 8/36 BOMBS  
 F 2000 MIL HRS - F 5000 CIV HRS

# AMERICANS

A DONIGRAN - A SAFRANEK - A SIBBETS  
 B 4000 FLYING HRS - B 7000 FLYING HRS - B 6000 FLYING HRS  
 C 200 B-26 HRS - C 1700 B-26 HRS - C 1600 B-26 HRS  
 D 40 HRS THIS PROJECT - D 15 HRS THIS PROJECT - D 36 HRS THIS PROJECT  
 F BLANK - F ELANK - F SHOT DOWN 19 APR 61

A HARMER - A LAMANTOUR - A LANDRAIN  
 B 4000 FLYING HRS - B 2000 FLYING HRS - B 4000 FLYING HRS  
 C 950 B-26 HRS - C 230 B-26 HRS - C 850 B-26 HRS  
 D 50 HRS THIS PJCT - D 50 HRS THIS PJCT - D 80 HRS THIS PJCT

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A GALENTER - A WESSEX - A ROSTAN

B 2700 FLYING HRS - B 3000 FLYING HRS - B 2000 FLYING HRS

C 425 B-26 HRS - C 450 B-26 HRS - C 300 B-26 HRS

D 75 HRS THIS PJCT - D 60 HRS THIS PJCT - D 75 HRS THIS PJCT

BLANK - BLANK - F SHOT DOWN 19 APR 61

A PETERS (HBILKA) - A SIMPSON (HBILKA)

B 8000 FLYING HRS - B 16000 FLYING HRS

C 15 B-26 HRS - C 450 B-26 HRS

D 15 HRS THIS PJCT - D 200 HRS THIS PJCT

B. C-46

A PILOT

B TRAINING HOURS

C TRAINING SORTIES

D AIRDROPS-TRAINING/MISSIONS

E PREV EXPERIENCE

A FERRER (SQ CMDR) - A TELLECHEA - A NAVARRO

B 10 - B 5 - B 10

C 20 - C 10 - C 20

D 25/6 - D 25/7 - D 20/4

E 11000 HRS - E 8500 HRS - E 4000 HRS

A GOMEZ - A LVAICES - A GARCIA

B 10 - B 10 - B 10

C 20 - C 20 - C 20

D 20/4 - D 10/8 - D 25/7

E 6000 HRS - E 6000 HRS - E 2500 HRS

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A GINEDRA - A SOLIS - ECHEVARRIA

B 4 - B 4 - B 4

~~SECRET~~  
~~SECRET~~

C 8 - C 8 - C 8

D 25/3 - D 25/4 - D 25/9

E 2100 - E 1500 HRS - E 1000 HRS

A SECADES - A VAZQUEZ - A PELLON

B 4 - B 4 - B 4

C 8 - C 8 - C 8

D 15/1 - D 15/4 - D 15/3

E 1000 HRS - E 800 HRS - E 500 HRS

C. C-54

A PILOT

B TRANSITION

C SOLO

D MISSION

A MENENDEZ(SQ CHDR) - A VALDES - A CERECEDA

B 10:20 - B 11:35 - B 20

C 175:55 - C 62:50 - C 79

D 11 - D 5 - D 5

A CASTELLANOS - A PONZOA - A TELLECHEA

B 3:45 - B 8:07 - B 13:20

C NONE - C 28:45 - C 4:35

D 1 - D 1 - D 3

A GARCIA - A EDUARDO FERRER - A SEDA

B 8:50 - B 19:10 - B 14:25

C NONE - C 25:15 - C 88:00

D 2 - D 4 - D 7

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A T. GARCIA - A AFONT A CADRERA

B 8:30 - B 10:00 - B 14:35

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C 5:55 - C NONE - C NONE

D 6 - D NONE - D 2

A SOLIS - A LAZO - A WHITEHOUSE

B 5 - B 10:55 - B 15

C 25:15 - C 24:45 - C NONE

D 2 - D 5 - D 2

A BOURNE - A ALEXANDER - A BALBOA

B 2 - B 9 - B 2

C NONE - C NONE - C NONE

D 1 - D 1 - D 1(0-46)

D. C-46 AMERICANS

A SIMPSON (HBILKA) - A PETERS (HBILKA) - A TEETS (HBILKA)

B 16000 FLYING HRS - B 8000 FLYING HRS - B 16000

C 8000 C-46 HRS - C 4000 C-46 HRS - C 8000 C-46 HRS

C-54 AMERICAN

A SIMPSON - A PETERS

B 16000 FLYING HRS - B 8000 FLYING HRS

C 4000 HRS - C 1500 C-54 HRS

A TEETS - A CHORAK - A NUFFIELD

B 16000 FLYING HRS - B 6000 FLYING HRS - B 7500 FLYING HRS

C 4000 C-54 HRS - C 2000 C-54 HRS - C 1200 C-54 HRS

A 00ENLOCH - A ELICOP - A PICKEUAM ~~SECRET~~  
 D 4000 FLYING HOURS - B 6000 FLYING HRS - B 8000 FLYING HRS  
 C 1000 C-54 HRS - C 125 C-54 HRS - C 100 C-54 HRS

2. RE PARA 2 REF

AIR COMMANDER - TEEGEN

PLANS STAFF

OPS SECUR - SAGASTA (*Stonbridge*)  
 OPS COMMO - O'BANNON (*O'Brien*)  
 CONTROL - GILLISON, MOMSTON (*Momms*)  
 INTEL/PI/TGTS - DAMBRA (*Duwall*)

OPS STAFF

CHIEF FLT OPS - SIMPSON (*Sigrist*)  
 B-26 OPS - *Donigan* DONIGRAN, *Safranek* SAFRANEK, *Sibbits* SIBBITS  
 C-54/C-46 - *Peters* PETERS, *Teets* TEETS  
 AIR RESCUE - TEETS  
 PDO'S - WINBY (*Wall*)  
 MAINT - TOFFOLO (*Turk*)  
 ARMAMENT - SASSAMAN (*Saw*)

EXPERIENCE CAN BE OBTAINED HQS ON STAFF AND AIR COMMANDER.  
 NAVIGATORS MAINLINE, KCAHEL, PETERS AND TEETS CONDUCTED  
 MISSION NAV PLANNING WITH CUBAN NAVIGATORS.

SIMPSON, PETERS, TEETS FLYING EXPERIENCE LISTED ABOVE.  
 ALL HAVE 10 YEARS OR MORE CLANDESTINE SERVICE OF WHICH HQS  
 IS AWARE.

3. RE PARA 3

AMERICAN STAFF - 20

CUBAN STAFF - 16

4. CUBAN STAFF EXPERIENCE INCLUDED IN B-26/C-54/C-46

PILOT EXPERIENCE.

SECRET



1 PER REF FOLLOWING SUBMITTED:

OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

- A. DATE
- B. AIRCRAFT TYPE
- C. AIRCRAFT NBR.
- D. PILOT
- E. TARGET
- F. REMARKS

A. 17 APRIL 1961

B. C-46

C. 855

D. FERRER

E. DZ-3 AND DZ-4

F. LIGHT GRD FIRE DZ-3. DROPS OK ON TGT

A. 17 APRIL 61

B. C-46

C. 877

D. NAVARRO

E. DZ3 AND DZ-5

F. DZ-3 LGT GRD FIRE. DROPS OK ON TGT. TWO FRIENDLY TANKS AND THREE TRUCKS.

A. 17 APRIL 1961

B. C-46

C. 788

D. LUAICES

E. DZ-3

F. DROPS OK CN TGT.

A. 17 APRIL 61

B. C-46

C. 873

D. TELLECHEA

E. DZ1-2-3

F. DZ-1 NO DROP DUE FIGHTING. DZ-2-3 DROP OK.

JUMPED BY SEA FURY MANEUVERED IT TO CRASH IN SEA.

A. 17 APR 61

E. C-46

C. 864

D. GOMEZ

E. DZ-1

F. DZ-1 DROP OK.

A. 17 APR 61

B. C-54

C. 7711

D. CERECEDA

E. DZ-3

F. DRCP OK. AIRFIELD SURVEYED OK.

A. 18 APRIL 61

B. C-46

C. 864

D. FERRER

E. PLAYA-GIRON AIRFIELD

F. LANDING-ABORTED DUE ENEMY AIR (SEA FURIE AND T-33) AND SEARCH

AZN 18 APRIL 61

B. C-54

C. 7711

D. VALDES

E. BLUE BEACH

F. DROP OK

A. 18 APRIL 61

B. C-54

C. 7710

D. CERECEDA

E. RED BEACH

F. BROUGHT BACK 2 BUNDLES GRD FIRE ON 4TH PASS OPPOSITION IN AREA.

A. 18 APRIL 61

B. C-54

C. 7107

D. MENENDES

E. BLUE BEACH

F. DROP OK

A. 18 APRIL 61

B. C-54

C. 7711

D. TELLECHEA

E. BLUE BEACH

F. ABORT - DUE DAYLIGHT AND REPORTED ENEMY AIR.

A. 19 APRIL 61

B. C-46

C. UNK

D. GOMEZ

E. PLAYA GIRON

F. ABORT - RECALLED DUE ENEMY AIR.

A. 19 APRIL 61

B. C-46

C. 864

D. LVAICES

E. PLAYA GIRON AIRFIELD

F. ABORT - PILOTS DISCRETION DAYLIGHT.

A. 19 APRIL 61

B. C-54

C. 7711

D. OFE ELDON

E. BLUE BEACH

F. ABORT - DUE ENEMY AIR. 2 B-26'S SHOT DOWN SAME TIME.

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TRAINING UNIT

MR. GAR THORSRUD - Overflight crew member for Agency (PDO); qualified pilot ANG - fighter aircraft; covert air activities since 1952.

MAJOR B. B. CAMPBELL - Air ops officer (command pilot); combat veteran WW II & Korea; B-26 pilot Korea; B-57 Tactical Air Command; operations officer - Squadron to Group - 3800 hrs (1700-2000 B-26); over 50 missions

MAJOR E. E. HECHT - Master Navigator; former T. A. C. RB-66, B-57, B-17 Navigator, 5000 hrs., over 25 missions; combat former Instructor Navigator

MAJOR J. H. AIMAN - Master Navigator; former SAC B-47 B-29 Air Rescue (long range low level - 8th Gp); veteran WW II & Korea; Instructor Nav Tag Cmd

MAJOR K. R. BURTON - IP - Command Pilot - combat veteran WW II & Korea; 25 combat missions; IP - C-54's; former navigator; 7000 total hours

MAJOR TERRY ABELN - IP - Combat Veteran WW II & Korea; experience in Far East with this organization training people in Formosa; over 50 combat missions; B-26 pilot; RB-69, C-54, C-46 qualified. 5,000 total hrs (1700 - 2000 B-26)

CAPT R. J. DURNIN - IP - Instructor in Tag Cmd; fighter pilot Korea - B-26 qualified; over 50 missions; 4,000 hrs (1500 B-26)

CAPT. FRANK JONES - C-54 IP; former MATS pilot - 9,000 hrs; trained in low level cargo drops

MR. D. W. ADDISON - C-54 IP; 7000 hrs.

MR. C. SIEGRIST - WW II - combat experience B-26, C-46, C-54; ATR qualified commercial pilot; covert activities experience; Air America

MR. W. BEALE - Fighters WW II & Korea; Air America

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PERSONNEL

I. Development Projects Division (DPD) - Agency air operations (Washington)

A. ~~XXXXXX~~ Headquarters, Washington, Personnel Support

Direct - 14 total (Security, Cover, Admin, Finance, Materiel, 6 operations)

Indirect - All sections - Operations, Weather, Intell, Admin, Security, etc., plus facilities

Organization - JMGLOW Hqs. Washington  
Normal

1. ~~Usual~~, i.e., Operations, Materiel, Admin, etc.

Experience - JMGLOW Hqs. Washington

1. Chief - Lt. Colonel G. Gaines, Command Pilot, 5,000 hours
    - a. 19 years service; extensive experience covert operations since 1951; Air Sea rescue; 26 combat missions WW II.
    - b. Operations staff all highly qualified USAF air operations officers.
    - c. All support chiefs within DPD long experienced in covert operations
- B. JMTIDE

Total - 316 (157 Cuban, 159 American)

Organization

1. Air Unit - ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Chief and Deputy (20)
  - a. B-26 - 3 operations officers - 1 navigator
  - b. Transport (C-54 - C-46) - 3 operations officers - 1 navigator
  - c. Administration - Commo, Security
  - d. Maintenance
  - e. PDO
  - f. Ordnance

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## 2. Base Unit

- a. Chief of Support - Staff Employee full time. (In addition to performing functions of administering the base and its personnel, this man with the Chief of Security conducts all liaison with the local contracting firm (NIPCO), the docking facility, and the local officials.
- b. Finance Clerk - Staff Employee full time
- c. Security Staff
  - 1 Staff Employee full time (Chief)
  - 1 Staff Employee TDY during operational phase
  - 8 CIA Contract Guards
  - Guardia Nacionala (perimeter guards)
- d. Supply Section
  - 2 Staff Employees full time
  - 1 full time position - staff employees rotated into this slot from Eglin
  - 1 ANG tech
- e. Medical Staff
  - 1 Doctor full time; CIA contract employee; American
  - 1 Staff Employee medical technician
- f. Communications
  - 10-12 full time Staff Employees
- g. Messing Facility
  - 4 ANG cooks
  - Indigenous cooks and waiters, etc.

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Time	Scheduled	Flown	Destroyed	Emerg. Base	Total A/C In-cumies
9. D+1 (18 April) (GLOW 4739)	50% all B-26's committed beach-head support	6	0	1	10
10. D+2 (19 April) (BELL 4834)	Max effort beachhead support. Navy air cover between 1130Z and 1230Z	7	2 (T-33)***	0	12
11. D+2 (BELL 4862)	Stand-down air activities				
TOTALS					
		39+(4 aborts)	7	6	
			+ 1 Boca Chica (unaccounted)		
			8		

NO ~~ITS~~ OBJECTION TO *as requested by JS.*  
DECLASSIFICATION DATE **MAR 14 2000**  
REQUIRES CONCURRENCE  
OF NSC

NO DIA objection  
4-6-00  
TDR

CIA HAS NO OBJECTION TO  
DECLASSIFICATION AND/OR  
RELEASE OF CIA INFORMATION  
IN THIS DOCUMENT  
2/7/00, bch

## STATE DEPT. DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW

1 Retain class'n  
2 Declassify  
3 Change/classify to  
with concurrence of

EO 12958, 25X

DPR/IR by JS Date: **MAR 23 2000**

4 May 1961

## After Action Report On OPERATION PLUTO

1. Preparation:

On 28 March 1961 the LCI's ELAGAR and BARBARA J. departed Stock Island, Key West, Florida for Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, arriving on 2 April 1961. The two case officers of the ships, Mr. William Robertson of the Barbara J. and Mr. Grayston Lynch of the Elagar and the two ships' captains Mr. Ryberg of the Elagar and Mr. Shane of the Barbara J., had been told that they were to lead and direct the landing phase of the coming invasion of Cuba which would be staged from Puerto Cabezas and all the details of the operation would be given us in Puerto Cabezas. Enroute we received a cable directing us upon arrival at Puerto Cabezas to assemble and test 36 small boats that were to be used in the coming operation. After arrival in Puerto Cabezas, the crews of the two ships carried out this mission completing it on 10 April. The briefing team from Washington arrived about 11 April and briefings were conducted on 12, 13, and 14 April. These briefings and the operations and administrative plans given us were clear and thorough. The Elagar was given the position of command ship and the mission of landing troops on both Blue and Green Beaches. The Barbara J. was to land troops on Red Beach and then patrol to the east to cover the landing areas.

2. Plan For Blue Beach:

The plan for Blue Beach called for landing two battalions, the <sup>274</sup> 4th



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aboard the Caribe and the 6th aboard the Rio Escondido, beginning at approximately 0100 hours, 17 April in 4 LCPV's. Three LCU's preloaded with tanks, trucks and other vehicles were aboard a Navy LSD which would rendezvous with us five miles from Blue Beach and transfer the craft to us. They were to land on Blue Beach at first light. After the landing at Blue Beach was well underway, the Blagar was to come alongside the Atlantico and take aboard the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion and with one LCPV following proceed 16 miles east to Green Beach, put the battalion ashore and return to Blue Beach to act as Command Ship and direct the loading of the cargo ships. Aboard each LCI was a thousand men packed of arms and ammunition plus some resupply of ammunition. This was to be on call for the brigade ashore. The landing at Green Beach was to be conducted as soon as we felt we could leave Blue Beach, but was not expected to be done until after daylight of the 17th.

The reconnaissance of the beach itself and the marking of the landing sites was to be conducted by the UDT, teams that had been especially trained for this job for the last four months. There were three of these teams: one three-man team in the Barbara J for Red Beach, one five-man team for Blue Beach, and one three-man team for Green Beach were aboard the Blagar. They were to land as soon as the LCI's arrived in the landing areas and while the LCPV's and small boats were loading the troops. It was felt that they would have about one hour to perform their mission.

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3. Plan For Red Beach:

The LCI Barbara J. was escort for the cargo ship Houston which held the 2nd and 5th battalions into the Bay of Cochinos and land them at the head of the bay on Red Beach. This was to be done utilizing the small boats (12) of the Houston. It was planned to load each boat with ten men and their equipment. After this landing was completed the Barbara J. was to escort the Houston back to Blue Beach where its cargo was to be off loaded by the LCU's. The Barbara J. was then to patrol for ten miles to the east of Green Beach.

In all this planning we were told that early morning air strikes on the air bases in Cuba were planned and that these would take out all of Castro's air force.

4. Movement To The Beach Areas:

The Rio Escondido had damaged her props on logs coming out of New Orleans enroute to Puerto Cabezas and could only do five knots so this ship was loaded first and left Puerto Cabezas on 12 April. All the other ships left on the night of 14 April and proceeded independantly to an assembly area at point AA. The brigade commander and staff were aboard the Elagar. All ships arrived on station at 1730 hours 16 April and formed a column for the run into the beaches. The column was led by the Elagar and followed at 800 yard intervals by the Caribe, Atlantico, Barbara J., Houston and the Rio Escondido. At five miles from Blue Beach the LSD rendezvoused with the column and the transfer of the landing craft began. At this point the Barbara J. and the Houston left the column and proceeded toward Red Beach. The Elagar moved on up to within two miles of Blue Beach to launch the UDT teams. This five-man team and Mr. Lynch departed the Elagar at 2345 hours 16 April in a seven-man, Navy rubber

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UDT boat with a 15 HP silent motor. Two men were armed with BAR's and the other four with Thompson sub-machine guns. The team was equipped with a FRC-10 radio and lighting sets for beach and buoys for marking the channels. Escorting them part of the way was a 20 foot catamaran boat from the Elagar. This boat also had a FRC-10 radio and mounted one .50 and one .30 caliber machine gun. This boat was to lie off the beach and provide cover for the UDT teams.

5. Landing At Blue Beach:

The town of Playa Giron was well lighted and a cluster of very bright lights on the right of the town proved to be from the small group of buildings at the jetty which marked the right boundary of the landing area. At about 1000 yards out, six men were observed outside these buildings looking seaward. As there were no lights or noise from the ships it was assumed that they were merely coast watchers which later checking proved to be correct. The UDT team started into the beach about 300 yards west of these buildings and at when 500 yards out, all the lights in the buildings were switched off. The UDT team discovered a coral ridge about 100 yards from the beach running across the front of the landing area and one foot below the surface. They crossed this and started the boat into the beach. Fifty yards from shore a jeep came from the town down the beach road, and headed east and picked them up in its headlights. This jeep stopped directly in front of the team and turned toward the water throwing its headlights on the boat. It then caught the full fire of two BAR's and four Thompsons and was

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knocked out instantly. The team moved on to the beach and called the Elagar on the radio and told them what had happened. They also called for an immediate landing of troops on the beach before the enemy could rush in its troops. The team placed a red light by the jeep, moved toward the jetty 150 yards to the east and placed the other one; then moved out onto the jetty and placed the large white light to guide the landing craft in. While this was taking place someone pulled the master switch and blacked out Playa Giron completely. Three trucks were then observed moving toward the beach area without lights. These trucks discharged some troops who moved in on the UDT team who were in position in some old ruins on the jetty. The Elagar then moved in near the jetty to lend fire support to the landing. The Elagar was armed with eleven .50 caliber machine guns, five .30 caliber machine guns and two .75 MM RR. The militia was fired upon by the UDT team when they attempted to remove the red marker lights off the beach. This fire fight was in progress when the Elagar opened fire on the beach from a distance of 400 yards, clearing it completely in a few minutes. The only return fire was from one .50 caliber machine gun firing from the direction of the town. This fire wounded one man on the Elagar and then ceased fire. After about ten minutes of firing on the beach area, the Elagar moved back and the first two LCPV's came in. They struck the coral about 75 yards from the beach and tried to ride over it but could not. They then dropped their ramps and the troops waded ashore. The first troops came ashore yelling but once on the beach moved out quickly and quietly. The UDT team called the second two LCPV's to land and warned them about the coral and had them come in slower and to discharge their troops

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as soon as they grounded on the coral. The brigade commander and his staff landed in a boat from Blagar at this time and took command of the beach. His radio was not working so his messages were relayed over the radio of the UDT team. There was no opposition to this landing as the fire from the Blagar had driven the militia away and no firing was heard until the troops started moving through the town. Mr. Lynch then returned to the Blagar to direct the rest of the landing, and to prepare to go to Green Beach. The five men of the UDT team were left on the beach to find a landing site for the LCU's. They had the PRO-10 radio and the boat and motor. The landing of troops continued and by first light all the troops of the 4th battalion were ashore and the 6th battalion was starting its troops ashore using the small boats from the Rio Escondido. Two of the LCVP's were holed by coral and after making several trips ashore one was forced to beach itself and the other sunk but the crew was picked up and sent to the beach. The UDT team continued to search for a landing site for the LCU's with no luck until a local fisherman was found who showed them a passage through the coral that could be used at high tide about 0630. This was a narrow channel and could only be used by one LCU at a time. The channel was marked by buoys and at 0600 hours the first LCU landed. After this LCU was off loaded, it backed out and another moved into the channel. The empty one was sent to the Rio Escondido to complete the off loading of the 6th battalion. As this was taking place Red Beach called and reported they were under air attack by a B-25. About ten minutes later or at 0630 the first enemy aircraft appeared at Blue Beach. It was a B-16 which came from the east and straddled the LCU's landing on the beach causing some damage to the motor of one LCVP which proceeded into the beach under its own power. There were no casualties from this attack and

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all anti-aircraft guns were firing on the plane. It left to the west in the direction of Red Beach. As this plane was leaving two more planes were sighted coming from the west and fire was put on them before it was discovered they were a friendly B-26 escorting a C-46 for the parachute drop. When they were recognized as friendly the fire ceased. No apparent damage was done to the planes but we were told later that one paratrooper was wounded but jumped anyway. The blue wing bands that were to identify our planes could not be seen until the planes were overhead and proved to be of little value in telling friend from foe. The enemy air attacks, although practically continuous, were never in groups of over two planes each. Each plane attacked independently and when he had fired his rockets left immediately. The only types observed were B-26's, which strafed and fired rockets, Sea Fury's which usually only fired rockets (four) and T-33 jets which fired rockets also. The B-26's and Sea Fury's were usually brought under AA fire with some effect but the T-33's always came from high out of the sun and we were never able to bring effective fire on them. After the first air attacks I called the brigade commander on the radio and advised him against moving the Blagar east to make the landing at Green Beach. The reasons given were that the departure of the Blagar would leave the ships in the beach area without their most effective anti-aircraft fire. Also by this time we had lost 3 of the 4 LCVP's and if the enemy planes hit us on our way down to Green Beach (a 2 hour trip), it might result in the loss of the battalion plus the command ship. I told him I could put the battalion ashore right away on Blue Beach by using the LCU's, and he could then start them toward Green Beach on the road. He agreed

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to this and two of the LCU's took this battalion ashore on Blue Beach.

At about 0700 our own B-26's were on station over the landing area and we thought the air attacks were finished but at 0800 a Sea Fury came in and dove on one of our C-46's that was returning from dropping the paratroopers. He came through our AA fire and made a firing pass on the C-46 which had dropped down next to the water and was staying within the harbor area. The Sea Fury was caught by our fire as he pulled up from his firing pass and started smoking and crashed into the water, exploded and sank. This cheered up the AA crews and other attacks later on were met with all guns that could fire. At about this time we received a message from the Barbara J. that the Houston was hit and sinking and that they would beach her. The Barbara J. was damaged by near misses by rockets that had split her seams and she was taking in water. She started out of the Bay of Cochinos to Blue Beach. At this time a Sea Fury came through our fire and fired four rockets at the Rio Escondido one of which exploded the drums of aviation gasoline on her decks. An LCU was at this time enroute to the Rio to take off this gasoline and her other cargo. The fire soon spread and it was apparent that the ship was lost. The crew started jumping over the sides and swimming away from the ship. All the small boats in the beach area headed for the Rio and soon picked up all of her crew. These boats were about 1000 yards away from her taking the crew to other ships when she blew up and sank. The depth of the water at this point is 600 fathoms. The crew of the Rio was put aboard the Elagar and the gun and boat crews of the Rio were sent to the beach. A message was sent to Headquarters advising them of the loss of the two ships and an answer was

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received directing us to take all the rest of the ships to sea and return and unload under the cover of darkness. At this time we were attacked by a B-26 and the fire from the ships and from a friendly B-26 sent him away smoking. The Barbara J. and the two cargo ships the Caribe and the Atlantico were told to proceed ahead of us and wait 15 miles out. At this time I called the UDT team of 5 men ashore on Blue Beach and told them to return to the ship as we were going out to sea and return that night. They replied that they would stay on the beach and light it for us when we returned that night. All these men were captured when Blue Beach fell. The Elgar was to escort the three LCU's which could only do six knots. Two friendly B-26's flew cover for us on the way out although the wing tank of one was loose on the front end and was hanging down. These planes stayed with us until their reserve gas supply was gone and then one of them asked permission to drop his bombs on the Cienfuegos Airport on the way home. This permission was given and he departed. Results unknown. When we reached the 15 mile point we called the other ships and told them to assemble on us but only the Barbara J. showed up. The two cargo ships could not be found nor would they answer the radio calls. Soon after the Barbara J. rejoined us we were attacked by a B-26 and a Sea Fury coming from the beach area. The B-26 started an approach on the Elgar but was hit and as the plane fired its rockets it exploded in flames. The rockets struck 50 yards from the Elgar and the plane hit the water in the same place and bounced over the ship clearing the deck by only 20 feet. It struck the water about 100 yards over the ship and burned and sank. Parts of the plane

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were scattered over the deck of the Blager. The Sea Fury did not press his attack but made on short strafing pass at the Barbara J. hitting her with two or three .20 Mm shells. He then threw four rockets at the LCU's from a high altitude all of which missed and he departed. Two more attacks were made on us later in the day by lone B-26's none of which pressed the attack. The AA fire held them at a distance and they fired their rockets wide of the targets.

After dark of D-Day we continued south hoping to make some contact with the cargo ships but to no avail. Sometime during the night a message was received directing the Barbara J. to unload her ammunition and a 500-man pack into one of the LCU's for a run into the beach that night. It was felt that the Blager should go because of the damage the Barbara J. had sustained; however, upon charting the course we found that due to the slow speed of the LCU, we could not arrive until after daylight of D plus 1. Headquarters was notified of this and we were told not to go. While the planning for the run into the beach was underway, some of the crew of the Rio that we had rescued went into the engine room and stopped the engines. They said they would not go back into the beach area without jet air cover. They were subdued and the engines were started again. Some of the Cuban crew of the Blager were in sympathy with them and there were some rumors of mutiny. The day of D plus 1 was spent looking for the cargo ships which joined us late in the evening. We had orders to off load all their cargo plus the ammunition from the two LCI's into the LCU's and run it into the beach that night. We were told we must be in, unload and be off the beach by daylight. The LCU's were loaded

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and we started into the beach but again we notified Headquarters that we could not arrive until after first light. We were told not to go in but to stay where we were. All this time we were the only radio link with the brigade on the beach and they were sending out a steady stream of messages from the beach. Most of them were asking for air cover and air drops of ammunition. We relayed to brigade all the messages from Headquarters and from the air base. We were told that several air drops were to be made on the night of D plus 1 on the air field and the brigade was notified and marked the strip. The first air drop on the field was made but most of the chutes drifted off the strip into the woods. (These were recovered the next morning.) The brigade then requested that the drops be made on the town itself and the two later drops that night went there; one of them was right on target and the supplies landed in the streets and were quickly recovered but the last one was too close to the water and most of the chutes drifted into the sea. Some of these were recovered by small boats later on. We were also told that a C-46 escorted by two F-51's would arrive that night and land at the strip but they never appeared. One message also said that C-46's would land on the strip and discharge supplies and take off the wounded. The brigade was told to move its wounded (about 50 at this time) to the strip and they said they would. Later talks with survivors revealed that the brigade surgeon would not move the wounded to the strip for fear of losing them by air attacks. One C-46 did land at the strip at first light, discharged its cargo and departed taking one wounded man that the brigade commander had sent out with

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the situation report on the beach. This plane load was the last supplies ever to reach the beach. During the morning of D plus 2 the brigade kept reporting very heavy air, tank and artillery attacks from both north and east and asked continually for jet cover. These messages were sent back and we were told jet cover would be provided by unmarked jets and the brigade reported seeing them arrive over the beach area. We were not told that this was for one hour only. Later the brigade reported they were under air attack again and asked where the jet cover had gone. I could not answer this because we thought it would be continuous. The brigade also asked for close air support and sent back locations of troop concentrations and tank and artillery positions on the roads to the north. At this time the brigade was still in contact with the paratroopers to the north and was reporting them as being under heavy artillery fire and fire by tanks. The brigade reported three MIGS were over Blue Beach but it is possible they saw the unmarked jets and mistook them for MIG's. At 0500 on D plus 2 the brigade commander said that unless he got ammunition right away that he could not hold. I told him help was on the way and we would evacuate him. His reply was that he would never evacuate and that he would fight as long as he had ammunition. At about noon on D plus 2 the Elagar, the Barbara J. and the three LCU's loaded with supplies started for the beach. Our ETA was about 1800 hours. At 1300 I was told by the Navy and relayed to the brigade that close jet air support was coming. It never appeared. At 1430 the brigade commander told me that he was out of contact with all units, out of

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ammunition, fighting in the water and under direct fire from tanks 500 yards away. He said he was destroying his equipment and heading for the woods. He then went off the air. At this time Headquarters was notified and the convoy reversed course as there was no need now for going in. One hour later a friendly PBV came from the direction of Blue Beach and passed us going S.W.

6. Rescue Operations:

On D plus 3 we received an order to take the UDT personnel left aboard the LCI's (3 on Blagar and 3 on Barbara J.) and transfer them to the destroyer Eaton which was escorting us. This transfer was made using rubber UDT boats in very rough seas. Mr. Lynch and Mr. Robertson also transferred with the teams to lead them on the operation. The information we had indicated that the survivors of the Houston were on the west side of the Bay of Cochinos and were still intact. The night of D plus 3 was spent cruising the inlets and small islands west of the Bay of Cochinos looking for the Castro patrol boat SV-3 which was reported captured by our people. No sign of this craft was found and at first light of D plus 4 we sailed into the Bay of Cochinos and up to the Houston. It was aground about 200 yards from shore and the decks were just above water. There was no sign of life and no trace of anyone ashore. We came out of the bay very close to the west shore and searched it with glasses but saw no one. We checked the lighthouse on the island of Cayo Piedras and found one of our 20 foot CEF boats drawn up on shore. We blew the ship's whistle repeatedly and went up and down both sides several times but found no sign of life. We then sailed to the west of the bay and started checking the keys that run off the swamps on the west side of the

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bay. On Cayo Blanco we spotted our first two survivors. The destroyer was about 800 yards from shore and the men ran out on the beach and started waving their shirts. We picked them up by sending the UDT team in to shore in the rubber boat using the 16 HP silent motor. We then spotted other survivors and spent all day picking up small groups in the same manner. The destroyer then put its whale boat in the water to assist. Although these boats were forbidden to actually land on the beach they could transfer the survivors from the rubber boat and take them back to the ship leaving the UDT to continue their search. One UDT team of three men were put ashore and combed the islands all day to find the ones who could not or would not come to the beach. Later in the day two Navy A.D.'s, propeller planes, were sent to us. They flew very low over the beaches and swamps and spotted several small groups. The UDT teams were then directed to these groups by radio and picked them up. The search was broken off at dark on D plus 4 and Mr. Lynch and three UDT men were transferred to the destroyer MURRAY which joined us that night. On D plus 5 the search was continued by both ships. The MURRAY was given the west side of the Bay of Cochinos down to the first islands and the EAGON and the CONWAY which also joined us that night had everything to the west. At first light on D plus 5, Mr. Lynch and three UDT men landed four miles south of the Houston and started to search for survivors. The coast was searched all the way to the islands but none found. We then started to comb the same keys as the day before and picked up several more small groups. Due to physical exhaustion during this period,

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I cannot remember exact days. I believe we spent three or four days on this operation and were at one time or the other on four destroyers, one submarine and the aircraft carrier ESSEX twice. In all we picked up 26 survivors and found and buried one man on the beach. These survivors were in very bad condition and had been without food or water for five or six days. Most of them had only underwear or parts of uniforms left and some were naked. In all only two weapons were found among them, one pistol and one carbine. During this time three Castro helicopters were seen to the north of us flying very low over the swamps and were observed shooting the survivors by submachine guns from the air. They were seen to land on two occasions. One of these was a two place helicopter and the other two large Russian types painted green with no markings. On 24 and 25 April I conducted interviews with 19 of the survivors aboard the EATON. The following picture of events on the beaches came from these men:

A. Action At Red Beach:

The UDT team from the Barbara J. led by Mr. Robertson landed at about 0130 and placed the marker light on the right side of the beach but was fired on from shore when attempting to place the left marker. This fire was from small automatic weapons and was silenced by the fire of the UDT team firing M16's and submachine guns from the rubber boat. The first troops of the 2nd battalion started ashore in the small (19½ foot) boats of the Houston and the UDT team marked the left of the beach with a flashlight from 100 yards out in the rubber boat. The second wave received fire from shore while on

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the way in. This fire was silenced by the Barbara J. firing over the heads of the landing force. The militia fled leaving some of their weapons behind. Once ashore the troops moved through the town and cleaned it out. The landings continued until all the 2nd battalion minus one squad was ashore and the weapons company of the 5th battalion landed also. (For more details on this period see report by Mr. Robertson on Red Beach.) One survivor, the Company Commander of the weapons company of the 2nd battalion stated that soon after daylight the beach was secured and they had captured over 40 prisoners. They discovered that 12 militia had been stationed in the town to guard a small militia radio station but that 30 or 40 had come in the day before on a picnic and were spending the night there. After the town was secured and the radio station was captured, the force which was under the command of the Brigade Deputy Commander sent a group out and captured a motor pool of trucks and gasoline at a motel and park construction project west of town. He also stated that 40 men from this small village offered to join them and fight against Castro. These men were put to work driving the captured trucks and other labor jobs on the beach. They were in complete control of the town and were not hurt by the air attacks which were directed against the town itself. These attacks and later ones caused many civilian casualties. The first attack by the militia came at 1000 on D-day and was from the north. This force was estimated at between 500 and 600 militia and had some tanks but friendly airplanes knocked out the tanks before they could go into action. This attack was beaten off with very heavy

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casualties suffered by the militia. As they were running short of ammunition a call for help was sent to Blue Beach and one tank and two 2½ ton trucks of ammunition was sent to them along the beach road. This arrived at 1:00 just as the next big attack was about to hit them and the tank went into action as soon as it arrived. This attack was launched down the road from the north. The troops, all militia, were in open, 2½ ton trucks and open, semi-trailer trucks. The fire of the tank and the 57 MM R.R.'s, 3.5's and the 50 caliber machine guns of the landing force hit them before they could get out of the trucks. This force was estimated at 1500 and all the survivors of this action claimed they killed or wounded over half of them and destroyed most of the trucks. The next attack came late in the evening and continued all night. During the night action at least five enemy tanks were knocked out, two Russian ones and three American Sherman tanks. These were destroyed by 57 MM R.R. and 3.5's. How many were knocked out by the tank is unknown. The militia at one time sent an ambulance under a white flag to pick up wounded but tried to sneak two trucks loaded with militia in behind it. The tank destroyed all three vehicles with one round and the machine guns finished the job. At another time some militia that were trapped in some buildings came out to surrender but when the CEF troops moved toward them they dropped to the ground and opened fire. All this group was then wiped out by the CEF troops. The survivors stated that all the troops opposing them were militia and all prisoners had the Communist party card on their persons. When asked about these cards they stated that if they

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they had no cards they could not get work. Most of the militia stated also that they were willing to fight against Castro. At about 0730 on D plus 1 the force at Red Beach was low on ammunition and was withdrawn to Blue Beach in the captured trucks, their own trucks and the tank. They took their wounded with them but released all their prisoners upon departure. They destroyed the radio station and all the trucks that they could not use. Upon arrival at Blue Beach they held a muster to account for everyone. Blue Beach at this time on D plus 1 was quiet and the survivors stated that they had lunch and slept, cleaned up and were issued ammunition. That afternoon they went into action at Blue Beach, fought all night and at about 1100 the next morning 90 men of the 2nd battalion under the command of the Deputy Brigade Commander (Oliva) was sent back to Red Beach to stop a large column of militia, tanks and artillery that was massing there. This force it is believed never reached Red Beach but it is known that they went into action because they called for mortar fire and the 2nd battalion mortars fired 120 rounds for them and then was out of ammunition. Two tanks went out with this group and was seen coming back to Blue Beach about 1300 damaged and out of ammunition. Nothing more was heard of this group and soon after the enemy force came down the road from Red Beach and attacked it from the west. This force was very large and had heavy artillery (larger than 4.2) and tanks. One survivor stated that at 1400 he went to Brigade Headquarters which was by the beach for ammunition and the Brigade Commander and staff were there but when he made a second trip at 1530 the Brigade Headquarters was gone and also a sailboat that was tied

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up near it. He states that starting at 1600 the front lines collapsed due to the lack of ammunition and at about 1700 all resistance ceased. He left Blue Beach with four companions in a row boat and saw many other small boats leaving at the same time. The enemy planes strafed these boats and caused many casualties. His boat drifted all night and at dawn they found themselves on the beach on the west side of the Bay of Cochinos. They then made their way down the keys to the point to where they were rescued by the UDT teams. One survivor stated that his company was hit in Blue Beach on the night of D plus 1 by a shell fired from a tank that emitted some smoke and threw droplets on their clothing. The droplets did not burn, but the smoke did and caused choking and pain. They ran out of the area and when they returned later they found several dead from this shell, but he claims there were no wounds and the men died from what he thinks was a gas shell. He also stated that the next morning several men told him of the same thing occurring in their sectors, also by tank fire. Detailed action on Blue Beach is unknown due to lack of any survivors who landed there in the original force.

B. Sinking of Houston:

The Houston was hit sometime after first light by rockets while still at Red Beach. These rockets started fires in the number one and number three holds and the Houston pulled out from the beach. The fires were put out by the crew and the ship turned and started back in. At this time she was hit the second time by two rockets fired from a T-33 jet. These

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struck the stern somewhere around the screws knocking out the steering. The ship was crosswise in the bay and could only go forward or backward. She attempted to back up but started sinking by the stern so the Captain ran her up on the beach on the west side of the bay. This was about five miles south of Red Beach. The planes came back again so the order was given to abandon ship. Aboard at this time was one squad of the 2nd Battalion and most of the 5th Battalion plus a 20-man ship's crew, approximately 220 men. Six men were killed by the air attack and seven more drowned swimming to shore. Small boats were used plus lines to the shore to get the men off. After everyone was ashore the C.O. of the 5th Battalion took command and organized a perimeter. He then sent men back aboard to try to salvage what arms and equipment they could. Some was gotten off but as the holds were filled with water, this was not easy. He then sent scouts out in the direction of Red Beach, but they returned and told of running into militia between them and Red Beach. This beach perimeter was held until D plus 2. Some food and water was gotten off the Houston but not nearly enough. On D plus 2 a patrol craft about 35 feet long and mounting one machine gun came from the east and pulled up the Houston. It is believed that this was the Castro craft SV-3. The boat checked the Houston and then came in to the beach to check the three small boats drawn up on shore. When it reached the beach, the troops ashore fired on it and killed four of its six-man crew. Two were captured. The Captain of the Houston then took this craft together with the C.O. of the 5th Battalion, the padre, two or three of the doctors and five other officers of

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the 5th Battalion out to the Houston and put aboard all the gasoline and supplies they could find. The Battalion C.O. then gave the order for the beachhead to break up in small groups and try to get out to the south. Some groups went to the north, some went inland but most started down the Coast to the south. The Battalion C.O. then left to the south in the captured boat and said he was headed for Grand Cayman. Out of the groups who started south down the beach 21 were later rescued, including some of the crew of the Houston.

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MR. ROBERTSON'S REPORT OF ACTIVITIES ON BARBARA J

4 MAY 1961

(62)

The writer was Operations Officer on the Barbara J. The Barbara J is an LCI fitted with eight .50 cal machine guns, three .30 machine guns, a 75mm recoilless rifle, and a 57mm recoilless rifle, plus various automatic hand carried weapons. The job for the Barbara J during the operation was as follows:

1. The Barbara J was to escort the transport ship Houston into Bahia Cochinos to Red Beach. The Houston had aboard the 2nd and 5th Battalions Reinforced.
2. The Barbara J was to spot the Houston offshore, while the Barbara J's beach reconnaissance team reconnoitered the beach and set light markers at each flank of a suitable landing site.
3. The Barbara J was to provide gunfire support when necessary and assist in the unloading of the Houston's men and supplies at Red Beach.
4. When the beach was considered in good shape, the Barbara J was to escort the Houston out of Bahia Cochinos and proceed to patrol the beach from Green Beach eastward for five miles, engaging any enemy sea or road convoys heading toward Green Beach.
5. The Barbara J was to engage in any harassment operations which would confuse the enemy and help our own forces.

The objective of the 2nd Battalion on Red Beach was to secure the beachhead, proceed northward to Sopillar airstrip, link up with the paratroopers, and proceed to Objective A on the railroad at G2.0 - 72.0 on the 1:50,000 map. The objective of the 5th Battalion was to land behind the 2nd Battalion and take over and safeguard the beachhead.

At 2330 on D-1 the Barbara J and the Houston separated from the major convoy on schedule. At 0115 on D-Day the Barbara J and the Houston were on station opposite Red Beach. One Barbara J small boat with radio was dispatched to stand by with the Houston. The other small boat with the reconnaissance team and the writer proceeded ashore to the right of Red Beach and scouted and marked the right flank without being detected. Then a team proceeded by water to the point which was to be the left flank of Red Beach and discovered the point was occupied by enemy men. The 2nd Battalion commander was asked to notify us when he was within ten minutes of dispatching his first wave to the Beach. When the Battalion commander signified he was ready, the recon team approached the point. At about 30 yards off the point four or five machine guns and sub-machine guns opened fire on the recon boat. The recon boat returned fire and silenced these guns. The recon boat backed up to approximately 100 yards off the point and marked the left flank with a blinding flashlight towards sea. The first forty soldiers landed without opposition, though sporadic fire started as soon as they had landed ashore. This fire was their initial contact with the 50 militiamen in the village at the time of the landing.

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Within twenty minutes of the reconnaissance team's initial contact with the enemy, six or seven trucks were seen entering the area from the left flank. The writer called for supporting fire from the Barbara J. The Barbara J's first shots hit the lead truck and threw the convoy into darkness and confusion and apparently helped delay the convoy's arrival at Red Beach until later in the morning.

The reconnaissance group proceeded then to help in landing the troops. These troops were landed with approximately two units of fire and a minimum of equipment other than their personal weapons and the unit weapons. The unit weapons we succeeded in getting ashore were four .30 cal light machine guns, four 81mm mortars, and four 57mm recoilless rifles, plus 3.5 rocket launchers. On the second trip to Red Beach, our boat was hit by machine gun fire coming from about 200 yards left of the Red Beach left flank. One man in the boat was killed. On arrival at the beach this second trip, the writer sent for a representative of the 2nd Battalion command post, and between the two, an airstrike plan was set up in the event that communication might be out when the daylight airstrikes arrived. In the plan, the aircraft would take on any targets moving along the beach towards Red Beach or along the road from the north towards Red Beach, and at first daylight the 2nd Battalion commander would send a well-briefed officer to the beach carrying a red flag for further conference with the writer. The commanding officer at this conference requested that future landing craft be landed nearer the right flank of the beach in as much as all enemy activity to date was being encountered from the left. There were explosions within the beachhead at this time which the writer took to be incoming mortar fire with some light calibre.

During this period, some .50 cal machinegun fire was directed at the Barbara J. The Barbara J was lying about 500 yards offshore and the Barbara J engaged this machine gun and silenced it.

The Houston reported that there were no small boats, so our recon team tied onto one of the Barbara J's rubber boats to the lee side of the Houston where we found seven or eight small aluminum boats huddled with no troop movement going on. The writer climbed aboard and got a boat-load and a half of soldiers off-loaded before being stopped by a Cuban believed to be the 5th Battalion Commander. The writer believes that this man's intention was to wait until first daylight before continuing off-loading the 5th Battalion. At this point, 270 soldiers had been off-loaded. This was the 2nd Battalion Reinforced and the weapons company from the 5th Battalion and the Assistant Brigade Commander.

On the trip into shore, first daylight had arrived and at approximately 6 o'clock a B-26 appeared low and machine-gunned our small boat without success on this first run. When he came again we turned our

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small weapons and the weapons of all the soldiers in the small boat and fired back at him. On this pass the B-26 wounded one soldier with a freak shot that passed through another man's weapon before hitting the soldier. On the third pass of the B-26, he immediately, after passing overhead, started smoking and wobbling and soon went down over land with one survivor parachuting out.

A second B-26 appeared and started after the Barbara J and Houston. He strafed and dropped two large bombs, both misses. The Barbara J's skipper was circling the Houston tightly and bringing all her firepower in support of the Houston during this action.

At this point, our cargo planes bearing paratroopers and accompanied by two friendly B-26's arrived in the area and the enemy aircraft departed. At the departure of our aircraft, we were attacked by a fighter plane which I believe was a Sea Fury. The skipper of the Barbara J decided to disperse until our air cover had better control and so moved the Barbara J and the Houston away from Red Beach about five miles.

The writer suggests that the following is a likely account of the short history of Red Beach. The account is compiled from observation and interrogation of survivors. Very little action occurred at Red Beach before daylight. Most of the shooting was our own. The air attack at daybreak, which included bombing and strafing the beachhead, damaged nothing important. At approximately 1000 a truck-mounted attack from the north involving 500 or 600 militia was broken up by Red Beach forces. This was accomplished with small losses to our forces and considerable loss to the militia. Fifty to seventy of the militia were captured, most of which were willing to join the Red Beach forces. The paratroopers were apparently engaged immediately upon landing, and link between the paratroopers and Red Beach forces was not accomplished. At 1400 on D-Day, another attack was made from the north involving 1,500 militia. An unknown amount were destroyed en route to this battle by a friendly B-26. Two of our own tanks which had been sent up from Blue Beach assisted in stopping this attack. From all accounts, this force was well handled by our forces, and we claimed 1,000 casualties were inflicted. Seven tanks, which arrived after midnight were engaged by our 57mm recoilless rifles and 3.5 rockets, and five were destroyed. On D+1 an orderly withdrawal to Blue Beach was affected, since Red Beach was out of ammunition. Red Beach losses at this time were 25 dead, and an unknown amount wounded. The wounded were carried to Blue Beach.

On arrival at Blue Beach, the 2nd Battalion was put into the Blue Beach defense line which had been comparatively quiet till this point. In the afternoon, a battle started which put 1,500 militiamen against the 2nd Battalion. This battle lasted all night. The following morning an attempt was made to regain Red Beach, but the 2nd Battalion encountered

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tanks, trucks, troops, and artillery, and it is believed, did not reach Red Beach. The heavy mortars supported the 2nd Battalion until out of ammunition. Two tanks which were supporting the 2nd Battalion were returned to Blue Beach damaged by this action. It is believed that the 2nd Battalion was lost with Blue Beach.

At the time when the skipper of the Barbara J ordered the dispersal of the convoy, a B-26 arrived requesting targets for his bombs at Red Beach. He was instructed to go to Objective A on the north road and engage any mobile forces moving towards Red Beach. He located a convoy moving into Red Beach with Blue marked trucks and was refrained from interfering with this convoy since it was known to be ours.

At this point the skipper of the Barbara J turned the convoy back towards Red Beach. The Barbara J and the Houston arrived off the point Carazones. When a T-33 jet arrived and strafed and fired rockets, with near misses for the Barbara J and hits on the Houston, a welded seam on the Barbara J was split, causing the Barbara J to take water at the rate of four feet each two and a half hours. The Houston announced the loss of their steering capability, and was at this time headed towards the beach. The skipper of the Barbara J ordered the Houston to reverse engines and back away from the beach. The Houston attempted to do this, but was observed to begin sinking rapidly by the stern. At the same time another Sea Fury started attacking the Houston. Gasoline was covering the water all around both ships, and the Houston reversed its engines again and made straight into the shore, grounding about 100 yards off-shore. As she struck shore, men were seen diving over the side in life jackets. The Sea Fury continued its strafing runs against the ship and the men in the water. From subsequent reports, we believe from seven to twenty men were killed in the strafing, and ten drowned from inability to swim. The Barbara J had no small boats; the Houston didn't attempt to use its three small boats. There was speculation as to whether we should attempt an evacuation, but this was tempered by the idea that the occupants of the Houston were scheduled to go ashore with the possibility that they could make a tie-up at Red Beach. The Barbara J was ordered to move to the Blue beach to provide protection for the unloading operations there, the ships at Blue Beach being under air attack also.

From interrogation of survivors, it is learned that the Houston group proceeded towards Red Beach, but the scouts observed militiamen, and the entire group withdrew to the swamp. My last radio contact with this group was an announcement by the 5th Battalion Commander that he had successfully regrouped 1 1/2 miles west of the sunken ship. Information on his position was requested for an intended air supply drop. Within a half hour he was under attack. His request was for small boats so that he could strip the Houston of necessary supplies. Arrangements were made for EB-12 rubber boats and paddles to be dropped at first darkness. Within a half hour after this arrangement, the Houston was under attack and apparently the enemy was trying to split it up. I feel that our voice of communication was being monitored. The

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following night an enemy patrol craft approached the Houston and landed five militiamen. These five were attacked by the survivors of the Houston. Two militiamen were killed and three taken prisoners. The three prisoners were executed because of the logistical problems they made for the survivors. On the 19th the skipper of the Houston, the 5th Battalion Commander, five 5th Battalion officers, the Chaplain, and three doctors left the beach in the captured patrol craft, bidding their men to scatter and make out for themselves. This might indicate a reason why the 5th Battalion seemed reluctant to go ashore at Red Beach. Of the remaining men, a few immediately made their way north through the swamps, and a few made their way south. Those that were rescued on the southern islands has seen most of the way in the swamps. The Houston's skipper and the small boat reportedly departed for Cayo Guano, but radio Cuba reported it landed at Cayo Largo and the men were captured.

As the Barbara J departed from Bahia Cochinos, a Sea Fury was circling, but apparently was bluffed by two or our B-26's which were flying protection for Barbara J. A jet T-33 was seen to attack one of the B-26's, and the B-26 was seen to fly lower and to either crash or make a crash landing on the airstrip at Blue Beach area. The remaining B-26 hovered over the Barbara J, reported he was out of ammunition, and asked for instructions. I requested that he stay as long as possible to bluff enemy aircraft, which he did, until he had only fifteen minutes reserve gasoline supply. This man's name was Ferrari and should be commended for courageous work.

At the entrance of Bahia Cochinos we had observed the Rio Esccondido catch fire and blow up.

On arrival in the Blue Beach area, all ships were ordered south. We departed with the Atlantico and Caribe leading, and the Barbara J providing close support. The U-boats protected by the Elagar followed. The Elagar requested all ships to merge for mutual self-protection. The Barbara J joined the Elagar and U-boats, and the Caribe and Atlantico disappeared over the horizon. One strafing and bombing pass was made on the right flank LCU, with the Elagar and Barbara J giving her support. What appeared to be a salvo boat of shore-based artillery splashed five shells within the convoy on the way out. This was possibly 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock in the afternoon of D-Day.

At approximately 3:30, when the convoy was outside the continental limit, a sea fury and a B-26 attacked. The Sea Fury circled high and the B-26 came for a low strafing attack, lining up the Barbara J and the Elagar. As the B-26 passed over the Elagar, it exploded in a great ball of flame. It is believed that hits from Elagar guns had entered the gas tanks, and that the pilot fired his rockets, causing the explosion. The Sea Fury then circled for a few minutes and started

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a run on the Barbara J, but peeled off early, probably because of the Barbara J's gunfire. He scored 20mm hits on the Barbara J. At this time we were ordered further out to sea.

Preparations were made for a night run into Blue Beach. When the order arrived, headquarters was notified that we were without the cargo ships, and that it was felt that it was impossible to arrive at Blue Beach before daylight. Air and/or sea support was requested, with the warning that we felt we were sure to be sunk without this protection and thus be no good to Blue Beach. During the night we were ordered to cancel this run. The following evening the cargo ships had been reassembled, and the Caribe was unloaded into LOUs. The Barbara J was unloaded into an LCU when the order came for the Barbara J to make an 500-man pack supply run to Blue Beach. The Barbara J was leaking and one bank of engines was out and emptied of supplies and had no small boats, so the responsibility was shifted to the Blagar. The writer transferred to the Blagar to assist in this run and to assist the Blagar Operations Officer with communications functions. At approximately midnight the run was started, with an additional warning to headquarters that we were going to arrive in daylight. An air or sea support was necessary. Sometime during the night this trip was cancelled.

The writer relieved the Operations Officer of the Blagar in communication duties at times during the night. The gist of the communication can be summed up as follows: The Brigade commander continually reported he was out of anti-tank ammunition and surgical supplies and had wounded to evacuate. All messages were forwarded to strike base and U. S. Navy. From strike base and U. S. Navy we continually received assurances that re-supplies and evacuation of wounded were being carried on and that a close air support strike was arranged for first light. A tank column had been located coming into Blue Beach from the north. Its exact location was reported by the Brigade Commander. Arrangements were made for strike base to take on these tanks at first light, and U. S. Navy jets were "on the way." The jets had not appeared when first light arrived and their whereabouts was requested. We were told that they were still "on the way."

At 20 minutes daylight a request from headquarters came that either of the two operations officers go on beach to evaluate the situation. A Cuban CW operator was recruited to go with the writer. No boat operator was found who would go. Subsequent activity negated this operation.

At daylight the beach was under air, tank, and artillery attack. During the night, two re-supply drops had been made, part of which went into the ocean, part of which was received. A C-46 had landed on the airstrip, dumped its supplies, and departed evacuating one wounded.

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The Brigage commander began talking in terms of his men standing in the water fighting, and "being massacred" and "murdered". At one point he could see four Navy jets high overhead, and was being attacked simultaneously by three enemy Sea Fury's. When he asked that the jets enter the fight and was told that we were doing everything to get permission, his comment was "God damn it, God damn you, God dam you. Do not wait for permission". He continually spotted tanks, artillery locations, and continually asked when would they be attacked by our airplanes. About midday the base announced that we were going in in full force, shooting, for evacuation purposes. The Brigade commander was told that within three hours the Navy forces, air and sea, plus our cargo convoy would be there to pick them up. He announced that an enemy tank was within 400 yards of his command post firing at him and he had no ammunition with which to fight it. He said he would not be there in three hours. In his next message he said he was destroying his communications set and going into the woods. We were trying to get him to hold on when communication abruptly broke. We have two reports: (1) that the Brigade commander was seen going to sea in a small sailboat, and (2) That he had gone inland to Excmabrey. The convoy started out to sea.

On the morning of D+3 the operations officers of the Blager and the Barbara J were transferred by rubber boat, along with six UDT men and personal weapons and radios, aboard the USS Eaton. Subsequently we boarded the aircraft carrier Essex along with the commander of the destroyer group, Captain Crutchfield, for the purpose of conferring with Admiral Clark and Marine Colonel Mallard about effecting rescue operations. It was generally thought among all concerned that the Houston survivors could be sought only if the information concerning them was recent, accurate, and reliable. The Eaton was dispatched towards Bahia Cochinos with our operations officers and UDT men aboard with the understanding that Mallard and Clark would seek information on the validity and accuracy of intelligence concerning survivors on the beach, and would send authorization or cancellation of that operation prior to the arrival of the Eaton on station. The operation was cancelled by Admiral Clark and we spent the night sailing close to the beach for light signals. At daylight movement was seen on Cayo Blanco del Sur. A rubber boat was dispatched and contact made with four survivors, who were pulled aboard. A whaleboat was dispatched from the Eaton with U-boats personnel aboard. The whaleboat would carry the writer and three UDT men to a position 200 to 300 yards off the beach, from where we would make the approach and contact with the survivors by rubber boat. Seventeen survivors were removed in five separate operations by this group over a period of two days. Pre-dawn landings and reconnaissance were made each day to assure that Castro's militiamen hadn't occupied the island during the night. Similar activity was conducted by the Blager operations officer and three UDT men on other beaches. The final day these two groups swept

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Cayao Miguel and Cayao Blanco del Sur and the island of Carrario. We carried loud speakers and searched in the Mangrove swamps and tried to reassure hidden refugees that the arms we carried were not against them, but against Castro. They were afraid of our arms. For example, one man had been lying with only his face out of the water, and when he saw the writer, he tried to sink under water. We tried to assure him, but he thought that the writer was a Russian. He said that there were no friends any more, and we were Russians. We broadcast that if they would call to us, we would approach them without clothing and arms. During this operation Castro had helicopters calling as if they were they were saviors of the refugees and then submachine gun those who would show themselves. I believe that we missed many survivors because of the smallness of our patrol. We could not cover every square foot of these islands, and the refugees were afraid to expose themselves to us. All were in weakened condition and at times had to be carried to the boat.

On this night, the militiamen moved on to the islands and set fire to the brush and claimed to have driven out 166 survivors. I believe that this is an exaggeration. On the following morning, the writer and four UDT men and rubber boats and equipment boarded the submarine USS Thresher and started towards Bahia Cochinos for an attempted rescue near the sunken Houston. This operation was cancelled at 7 o'clock in the evening and the Thresher returned to sea

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The writer and men returned to the Eaton. The writer and the operations officer of the Blagar were air-lifted to the Essex and subsequently to Guantanamo and to headquarters.

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SPS/CR by gmm

Date:

**MAR 23 2000**

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RELEASE OF CIA INFORMATION  
IN THIS DOCUMENT 27100, 444

31 May 1961

SUBJECT: Report from Wounded Man Evacuated from  
Playa Giron Airstrip by C-46.

REFERENCE: Memorandum dated 14 May 1961.

1. The wounded man, Pilot MATIAS FARIAS RIEJO, evacuated from the airstrip by C-46 at 0530 local 19 April carried no written report from the Brigade Commander.

2. The foregoing was verified on 24 May 1961 through discussion with Lt. Col. Frank Egan who would have been the recipient of a written report had such existed. Additionally, a discussion with ENRIQUE PEREZ SAN ROMAN, brother of the Brigade Commander and himself the Commander of the Heavy Gun Battalion, indicated that although the Brigade Commander was writing a report, it was not complete and did not leave with the man evacuated from Blue Beach. It was intended that it be transmitted via a subsequent flight which, of course, did not occur.

3. An attempt was made to describe pilot FARIAS on his return from Blue Beach. He was slightly wounded, but physically unharmed from lack of food and sleep and emotionally shaken by the events which had transpired. Lt. Col. Egan indicates that subject frequently lapsed into Spanish.

4. A recording was made of the remarks of pilot FARIAS which was subsequently returned to Headquarters. A transcription has been made of this tape at Headquarters, and the result is attached herewith. This tape was made within two hours of the pilot's return from Blue Beach.

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## Statement of Matias FARIAS Riejo

I am the pilot of the B-26 5915 that was shot down on the morning of the 17th at 10:30 in the morning. I take off from (garbled) base at about 4:00 in the morning. Supposed I am to go to Red Beach to try to support our infantry men that was taking care of the beach. About 7:00 in the morning I was over the beach with another B-26, (name garbled) was the other pilot. About 7:30 we received a message from one that was from our Chief that say that Castro fighters was hitting our ship. We go over there. I saw (name garbled) was fighting with one Sea Fury No. 545. I go in against the Fury, too, and we go (garbled phrase) but the Fury left and return to Havana Airport. Later on we come back to the Red Beach again and then I saw one T33 and one B-26 hitting our ships. Mr. (name garbled) left already because he have very low fuel and I stay along over our Red Beach and Blue Beach. About 8:00 I saw a 33 and a 25 flying over our ship. Hit him with a rocket and a machine gun. I go in the trail of the 26 and I shoot him down. The 26's number 933. It was about 9:00. He hit already in the Cochinos Bay. Both pilot was dead because they cannot make a parachute jump. About 5 minutes later after I shot down the 26 I saw one 33 that come in from about 10,000 to 12,000 feet over my head. Made a dive and he hit me with a 50 caliber machine gun. My right engine was put out and I got the smoke in my cockpit. I try to come back to our field in Blue Beach. I try to make a landing over there and when I come in there to make a pass the 33 made another pass over my aircraft so I lost all my control. I got smoke, flame, and my left engine was filled with smoke. I try to come in final but I haven't any control in the aircraft so we hit the left side of the runway more than 140 miles per hour without any control. The aircraft was exploding already and when I opened my eyes I was more than three hours in the hospital. My co-pilot was already dead. My co-pilot name was Lt. (garbled) Gonzalez from the Cuban Navy, he is already dead. Dr. (name garbled) was the Cuban doctor that was taking care of us here at the hospital told me that some guy that belonged to our country picked me up about 20 feet of my aircraft. I was almost burning up from the flame and they sent me to the hospital. After it was about 3 hours, about 3:00 in the afternoon,

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I (garble) out because they gave me some shots, some morphine. And then I go to the Headquarters of our Commander in the Beach. Over there, I saw, it was about 4:30, one was our B-26. It was shooting down the T33. Our 26 made a pass against the militia troops and dropped his bomb. Later on when he returned to the beach, and tried to make another pass, the 33 come in and he stay and our 26 exploding already over the Blue Beach about 2 miles to the coast. This night, all the whole day Monday the Castro aircraft made about 10 rides over our troops. Between 7:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the afternoon all the day 3 T-birds and 2 B-26 and one Fury was flying over our heads all day. Later on about 6:00 the Castro aircraft leave already, but they send 30 tanks on the Red Beach headquarters, and 30 from the east side of the Cienfuegos highway. So we can't move because we have 30 tanks in the left, 30 tanks on the right. Our troops began to make a retreat back because they was about between 9,000 to 11,000 and we was only about 1,000 men. I talked with the Navy chief, because I was in with the headquarters commander about 6:30 and we say that we can hold if the Navy can make any neutralization of the Castro air force. They say that we need to hold our position, they are over here and we are over there so we hold our position. The second day in the morning the Castro aircraft com. in at 6:30 in the morning and begin again a raid on our troops. We lost in the first raid 42 men. These 42 men, 25 was lost shooting at the Castro air force. At 6:30 the second day, between 6:00 to 6:30 begin the second ride. The second day was Tuesday and continue all the day. Our troops continue to make a retreat because they came in too much. They come in with about 9,000 to 11,000 men. And Mr. Pope San Roman, that was the chief of our troops, talking again with the Navy and say that we need to deter the Castro aircraft or we are lost already. The Navy said that they would send over there some aircraft and about 5:00 this afternoon I saw 3 Navy aircraft fly in formation over the Blue Beach. They made three passes and go away to the ship. Five minutes later the Castro aircraft come in and make another raid over our people. That night the Castro men continue the advance over our troops. We can't make too much because we are very low in parts, we don't have 30 caliber, and we don't have too many bazooka.

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grenades--we are very short in ammunition. So we continue to retreat. That night I personally was taking care of our airport, I personally shot two militia who try to make a penetration of the airport. One of them got a 38 (garble) and the other got a Czech machine gun. One of them said he got a Communist card that say that he belong to the Socialista Party. In Cuba we call this Communist. The other was a Militia. About 8:00 in the night I was talking again with our chief, that was Pepe San Roman, and he told me that our aviation can't mean anything to our troops, the Castro headquarters commander was in Red Beach, we can't hold 48 hours. We send a message to the ship that our aviation 26 may arrive this afternoon. This morning the 26 would try to make a raid in the Red Beach. I saw about 4:00 about 3 of our B-26 made a drop--a bomb-- over Red Beach. But about 20 minutes later I saw one T33 was shooting down our B-26 near Blue Beach about 6:30 to 7:00 on my watch over there. I saw they was shooting down so Pepe San Roman told me again that we can't send any more B-26 because they will shoot down all that we send. He told me that we call again to the Navy and say that send quickly the (garble) and the (garble) and everything they got over there because in another minute, we can't hold more than 24 hours. We are continuing to run out of ammunition. We don't have anything that the doctor can take care of the guys that was shot, we don't have any bandages, we don't have anything. My personal flight suit was taken by Dr. (name garbled) to try to make some bandage, because they don't have anything over there to fix the guys that were shot. About 6:30 in the morning one of our aircraft that was flown by Captain (name garbled) was landing at our airport. He picked me up. Five minutes before I was talking with San Roman give me all the map and all the positions and he say to me to tell Frank to come in quick with the air force because in another minute we can't hold 24 hours. Tell him he need to retrieve Red Beach and Central Cevodonga. They have more than 9,000 Militia. Tell Frank that through Red Beach and Cevodonga we gain the war in three days, so they can't say anything more against us. But tell him too that if he don't come quickly we are already lost. Five minutes later I made it from the aircraft, so I don't know what happened. I had seen the retreat before, because it was the second day there. I was

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over there about 4:30 to 5:00 I saw six B-26 made a raid on the highway going from the Blue to the Red Beach over there. They made a nice pass and I seen that they killed more than 200 Militia and destroyed two tanks and a lot of trucks. But when our troops begin to move because the Militia is beginning to run away already when we begin to bomb over there when our troops begin to move against the Militia. Five minutes later come back again the Castro air force so we need again to retreat. And another thing I want to add is that the first day before I was a fighter with the B-26 I shot two trucks with Militia. I made a low pass and I saw in the first truck coming a lot of Militia with Czech machine gun and the second truck coming with Militia and Castro rebels in front. I don't want to shoot the first one because I know that there was a woman about 14 to 18 years old, but my compatriot told me that had commenced shooting, so I shoot them maybe 6 or 7 times but I already destroyed the second truck that was coming.

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